

The American Mercury

APRIL 1949

35 CENTS

WILLIAM FOSTER AND THE REVOLUTION

by BENJAMIN GITLOW, page 408



OUR ANTIQUATED DEFENSE POLICY

Major de Seversky

OSCAR EWING MEETS THE PRESS

★ ★ ★

WOMEN HAVE NOTHING TO KICK ABOUT

Waverley Root

HUEY LONG'S LOUISIANA HAYRIDE

Hodding Carter

THE ENIGMA OF TOOTH DECAY

James and Peta Fuller

HOW MOTORISTS CAN SAVE MONEY

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The American Mercury

with which is combined the magazine, COMMON SENSE

VOLUME LXVIII

APRIL 1949

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The American Mercury for May

will contain, among other things

THE CASE FOR POLYGYNY, by Ralph Linton. *The distinguished Yale anthropologist presents the facts about the custom of plural wives in many "backward" tribes, of ancient and contemporary times, and points out the advantages — as well as disadvantages — of the custom. An article that will interest all grown men and women — women perhaps especially, for Dr. Linton says that the wives of any plural marriage are generally not as dissatisfied as might be imagined.*

ALASKA, by Frank L. Kluckhohn. *A fascinating study of one of our potentially richest territories — and a military outpost of prime importance.*

FEDERAL JUDGE GOLDSBOROUGH, by Fred Rodell. *A thrilling portrait of a most unusual jurist, who is full of surprises, and who has won the admiration of nearly all who have come before him — not to speak of the country as a whole.*

HOW TO MAKE AUTOMOBILES SAFER, by Thomas C. Desmond. *An authority on highway travel, who is a distinguished New York State Senator, here reveals how many accidents in cars can be done away with almost completely.*

In addition to these articles, there will be several other features, and also the usual departments: The Theatre, The Skeptics' Corner, The Library, The Soap Box, Down to Earth, The Open Forum, and the Check List.

Published monthly by The American Mercury, Inc., at 35 cents a copy. Annual subscription, \$4.00 in U. S. and possessions, Canada and in the countries of the Pan American Union. \$5.00 in all other countries. Publication office, Concord, N. H. Editorial and General offices, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y. Printed in the U.S.A. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Concord, N. H., September 29, 1936, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Five weeks' notice required for change of addresses. Indexed in The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Psychological Abstracts, and the Index to Labor Articles.

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The American Mercury

OUR ANTIQUATED DEFENSE POLICY

B Y

MAJOR ALEXANDER P. DE SEVERSKY

THE American people are rightly concerned with the problems of a proper military establishment. That, in the final analysis, will be decisive in the formulation of proper military strategy and therefore in resolving the fateful issues of war or peace, victory or defeat. The attention being devoted to the subject by Congress, the press and radio is fully warranted. Indeed, there is far more at stake than the average American as yet realizes.

Upon strategic decisions made today will depend our national security tomorrow. Moreover, basic commitments at the present stage will not be

easily revised or reversed. In the past a nation's defense involved only a fraction of its energies. Under modern conditions of total warfare, it involves the whole economic-social complex — industrial plans, allocation of machinery and materials, deployment of our very limited manpower, scientific and educational effort, foreign policies, our very way of life.

Since every citizen will be increasingly affected, a conscious and well-informed public opinion is essential to the success of military planning. In a democracy like ours, neither laws nor administrative edicts can be en-

MAJOR ALEXANDER P. DE SEVERSKY, *author of Victory Through Air Power, appeared regularly in the MERCURY during the war, and his arguments in these pages were credited by President Truman with doing much to arouse public opinion in favor of strengthening our air force. He contributed "The Only Way to Rearm Europe" to last month's issue.*

forced without enlightened popular support — our tragic experience with Prohibition provided the classic demonstration of this truth. The more public interest and discussion that can be generated on fundamental strategic questions, consequently, the healthier and the safer for our country.

It is in this spirit that I propose to deal with two major recent documents: (1) the report of the Hoover Commission's subcommittee on the National Security Organization, headed by Ferdinand Eberstadt, and (2) the first annual report on the National Military Establishment by Secretary of Defense James Forrestal. Messrs. Eberstadt and Forrestal are able and patriotic citizens. My strictures are in no sense personal, but directed solely to the military concepts and assumptions reflected in their reports.

Both documents, in my view, offer case studies in confusion. They evade or ignore the real issues upon which crucial decisions must be made, which are strictly strategic. Instead they concentrate on secondary problems of efficiency and economy of administration, with special emphasis on somehow imposing a bureaucratic moratorium on the so-called "bickerings" among the several armed services.

Unfortunately, fallacious strategy will condemn us to weakness, terrifying waste and ultimate disaster no matter how efficiently and economically it is put into effect. Moreover,

the implication in both documents that the disputes among Army, Navy and Air Force represent "individual service aims and ambitions" — the phrase is Mr. Eberstadt's — is both ungenerous and untrue. In fact, they represent vital differences of opinion on the most critical problems of this military period among men who are equally sincere and impersonal.

In short, those reports — like most of the publicity emanating from the Defense Department — would reduce the inter-service struggle to a sordid squabble for private advantages. This is unfair to the particular military men affected. More important, it is a menace to our national security. It tends to discount or conceal the genuine conflict of strategic concepts now under way, and it prejudices the chances of a correct resolution of that conflict by open, democratic processes.

The cure for the "bickerings" and overlapping authority urged by the Hoover Commission and Mr. Forrestal — namely, disposal of differences behind closed doors by a Defense Secretary armed with power of final decision — is worse than the disease. It deals with symptoms, not causes. It has a spurious bookkeeping logic as efficiency, and probably would achieve an appearance of peace in the military family. But it would squelch the great debate on proper strategy, a debate in which the American people and their Congress should have the last word.

The Forrestal and Eberstadt re-

ports alike concede that war-making methods are in a "transitional period." Yet paradoxically they take it for granted that essential strategy has been fixed by the experience of the last war, except for possible improvements in tactics and weapons. Mr. Forrestal, for instance, dismisses out of hand the possibility that a single force may become the overwhelmingly decisive element "in the foreseeable future." This contradiction makes much of their reasoning fallacious and many of their proposals unrealistic.

Actually, strategic ideas are not simply in transition but in violent revolution right now, by reason of revolutionary technological developments. Never before in the history of human conflict has a deep-reaching reappraisal of methods of war-making been more urgent, more inescapable. This fact — not petty duplication of authority or quarrels over prestige — is at the heart of the trouble in the Military Establishment. But it is a fact of which the Eberstadts and Forrestals either are or pretend to be unaware.

What the public has been watching, as through a glass darkly, is the head-on clash of old and new concepts — specifically, between the makeshift land-sea-air strategy evolved in World War II and the all-out air power strategy made feasible by recent scientific progress. As always in human affairs, the representatives of established, traditional "true and tried" ideas have the upper

hand. It would be against human nature if they did not strive to stack the cards in their own favor, through rigid administrative controls.

II

The official view, in the words of the Eberstadt document, is that the "National Defense Act of 1947 is, on the whole, soundly constructed, but is not yet working well." It is hardly a matter for surprise that neither Eberstadt nor Forrestal takes exception to the law as such. Both of them played active rôles in shaping it, and particularly in injecting those provisions and wordings which, in the writer's opinion, make the law defective.

What is needed, after more than a year of its operation, is an over-all review of the Security Act of 1947.

Its chief fault is that it does not limit itself to the broad concept of a military establishment but attempts, directly and indirectly, to prescribe strategy and even tactics; at one point, in the section dealing with the Department of the Navy, it actually goes to the extreme of assigning specific missions. It is as if a community, in setting up a new hospital, were to prescribe the medicines and surgical procedures to be used.

In its Declaration of Policy, the law calls for "integration" of the three services "into an efficient team of land, naval and air force." The reference is not to teamwork in the rhetorical sense of cooperation, but in the literal, combat sense of roughly equal

rôles and appropriations. It is mirrored with mathematical precision in President Truman's Budget for 1949-50, which asked for exactly the same amount — \$4.5 billion — for each of the three services.

Now only a miracle of coincidence could explain why services as different in make-up and function as the Army, Navy and Air Force should require precisely equal appropriations. We need no inside information to surmise that it represents a political rather than a military judgment: a puerile attempt to keep everybody happy and play no favorites. In strategic terms it is a frivolous, wasteful and dangerous approach.

The provision by law for an integrated team — sometimes covered by the phrase "balanced forces" — is described by Mr. Forrestal as "a sound basis for substantial progress in the unification of the armed services." A less sound basis could scarcely be dreamed up. We need only suppose that the balanced team has been obsoleted by new facts — that future strategy may have to be geared to the one decisive force, with the others in supporting rôles — to recognize the absurdity of making it mandatory by law.

The underlying assumption in both documents, as in the Security Act, is that the land-sea-air team of the last war will be relevant eternally. We must "weld them into a unified combat team," the Forrestal report declares of the three services, and it then goes on to say:

It would be the height of folly to assume that a war could be won by any single weapon. If we should ever have to fight a war, I cannot visualize a situation in which any one of the services would operate independently. We must have a strong Army, a strong Navy and a strong Air Force, and we must have them working together in the closest cooperation under all circumstances.

What the Defense Secretary proposes is that strategic thinking be frozen within the blinkers of his own vision — to conform to his personal inability "to visualize a situation" essentially different from the situation in World War II. In this he is following the Act, but that does not make it any more realistic. The whole thing amounts to an arbitrary edict against change, aimed to congeal strategy at a specific stage.

The triphibious team of World War II was an improvisation forced upon us by the failure to provide air power with enough range to strike directly at the heart of an enemy nation. The short-range aviation had to be carried piggy-back by the Army and Navy step by step, atoll by atoll, to plant it within striking distance of the enemy's industrial vitals.

Today, with air power of inter-hemispheric range at our command, the makeshift is no longer needed. Of course, as long as man lives on land and traverses the seas there will be a soldier and a sailor in the make-up of national defense. But their rôles will no longer be what they were when warfare was triphibious. They may have to retire to minor support-

ing positions — the writer for one believes this to be inevitable. But whether he is right or wrong, it is unreasonable to try to perpetuate the team by law. Either it is relevant, in which case the compulsion of law is superfluous; or it is outlived, in which case no law can resurrect it.

Suppose that in the days of cavalry we had an Act of Congress providing that the Secretary of War must weld his Army into an efficient team of men and horses. What chance would there have been for the development of tanks and other motorized forces under such a mandate? To prescribe a land-sea-air team today, as if it were an eternal and sacrosanct institution, is no less ludicrous. In retrospect, there is every reason to believe, this will seem weird.

Its inclusion in the Security Act was not at all accidental. It is no longer a secret that when the unification plan was proposed, the older services, and especially the Navy, were alarmed by the prospect of losing their dominant strategic rôles to the new service, the Air Force. The law was therefore shaped with a view to guaranteeing against such a horror. It was part of the price exacted for a compromise giving air power the organizational autonomy to which it was entitled in any case.

Let's put the matter bluntly. *Because their primary functions have been obsoleted by science, the older services are trying to perpetuate them by bureaucratic law.*

As a moral concept, teamwork is a

fine American idea. But in the specific military sense of the Security Act it can become a pretext for backwardness. It is as if the coach of a football team insisted that no single player could make a touchdown until every player had a chance to carry the ball a proportionate number of yards. That sort of "teamwork" won't work in football and it won't work in national defense. The time has come to reassign responsibilities to the teammates. Older members must realize that their greatest contribution may sometimes lie in dignified and patriotic self-restraint to enable the most capable member to operate with maximum effect.

In testifying before the Finletter Commission, Admiral Nimitz compared the structure of our national defense to a three-legged stool. What he tried to imply was that each leg carries approximately the same load, which, of course, is not the case under modern conditions. The Admiral is quite right in terms of the last war, but even then the concept was right only because we artificially restrained the range of our aircraft. From this point forward our national defense will rest primarily on a single pillar — Air Power — with the Army and the Navy as supporting elements at its base.

Today we are not developing the team to justify a strategy — we are seeking a strategy to justify the team. The attempt to impose it by ukase is the principal reason that the Act is proving unworkable; it is why

the partisans of the team concept want to endow the Secretary of Defense with unlimited authority to enforce it notwithstanding.

A strategic military force is one that is self-sustained in its own medium regardless of its base — capable of assuming control of that medium and denying it to others. By conquering freedom of action in its own medium it can achieve the end of hostilities through direct application of force.

Armies were the strategic force in the past on land, navies on the seas. Today, when neither of them can maintain battle under hostile skies, they have ceased to be strategic forces and have been converted into auxiliaries of air power. This is a revolutionary fact. It cuts across centuries of military thinking, but it is a fact that cannot be canceled out by law.

III

Sections 206 and 207 of the Security Act are parallel provisions defining the Navy and the Air Force Departments. The parallel, however, is broken in one curious and significant respect. Nowhere in the Air section is there any detailed assignment of definite duties, tactics, functions and missions. The Navy section, by contrast, specifies that this service "shall be generally responsible for naval reconnaissance, anti-submarine warfare and protection of shipping."

If this referred only to missions to be carried out by surface or under-

surface *ships* there would have been no need to specify. Neither of the other services has ships or could reasonably insist upon building them. Though mention of airplanes is carefully avoided, the assignments obviously envision the use of airplanes for the listed missions.

What does this mean? It means that the Navy, before consenting to the unification program, took the precaution of preserving for itself functions in which it might be superseded by the Air Force. Fearful that technological progress would strip navies of certain jobs, the Navy saw to it that they were arbitrarily assigned by law.

Whether the tactics and missions enumerated will remain primarily naval in the air age, or naval at all, is a wide-open question. For that very reason the admirals have resorted to legal congelment. Like certain trade unions which forbid the use of labor-saving machines, they are taking no chances on technological unemployment.

Since the Act specifies that the Navy be responsible for naval reconnaissance, why doesn't it also specify that the Air Force be responsible for air reconnaissance? The answer is obvious. The Navy managed to insert it in the law to bar the Air Force from the air over oceans. In effect this part of the Act erects artificial frontiers in the sky, reserving to the Navy complete dominion in air-over-water, as distinct from air-over-land. For an historical example to match

such bureaucratic stupidity we may recall the Army-Navy agreement a generation ago under which Army planes were forbidden to fly more than 300 miles beyond the shore.

When airplanes could not yet span large bodies of water, the assignment of these missions to the Navy still made sense — so much sense that it did not require bolstering by law. Today, with global aviation range, tactical iron curtains in the sky become a monstrous anachronism. We are opening ourselves to the confusions that existed at Pearl Harbor, only now on a global scale — and guaranteed by law.

This attempt to maintain vanishing functions by juridical means raises a lot of embarrassing questions. If the Navy is responsible for naval air reconnaissance, is the Air Force limited to land air reconnaissance? Shall air reconnaissance be taken over by naval aviation at the coastlines, as in a relay race? Must Air Force planes pursuing or seeking the enemy ask the Navy's permission if the pursuit should extend beyond the shore line? Merely to list such problems is to underscore the unreality of the whole business.

Since there will be no hostile navies to speak of in the future, outside of submarines, perhaps, what will the Navy reconnoiter? Under conditions of global aviation range, the entire air space around the globe will be infested with enemy aircraft. Leisurely, unmolested observation will become a thing of the past. Future

reconnaissance will necessarily be reconnaissance in force, conducted by combat planes ready to accept battle. The intent of the curious assignment is therefore to make sure that only *naval* airplanes shall undertake this task over water areas. Here we have the ingredients of confusion and divided command.

Even the idea that anti-submarine warfare must remain primarily a naval function is pure speculation. Even in the last war the spotting of subs and their demolition was in large measure carried out from the skies; and air offensive against the *sources* of submarines in enemy territory became increasingly the first line of defense against undersea craft.

It calls for no law to assure the Navy control of submarine chasers and other ships; but no law can guarantee to the Navy a prior or exclusive rôle in future anti-submarine warfare. The same holds true for "protection of ships." Insofar as the protection is provided by other ships, it is naturally a naval job. But in shielding sea traffic, ships have already been largely superseded by planes; present trans-oceanic range is likely to make it entirely an Air Force mission. To insist that the planes be naval is to turn back the clock of technology.

Having prescribed the obsolescent "team" as the only legal strategy, the Security Act thus compounded the blunder by specifying tactics and missions with an eye to providing made-work for an obsolescent Navy. The kind of centralized power for the

Defense Secretary demanded by both Eberstadt and Forrestal is calculated to enforce such military blunders.

Preservation of the Marine Corps as a *naval arm* is another legal provision of the same order, and in reality seeks to freeze the potentiality of that arm. The law provides, for example, that this Corps serve with the fleet "in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases." In truth, the infinitely more vital job today will be the seizure of advance air bases; the Corps must increasingly become airborne — an Aeromarine Corps, so to speak — to serve as spearhead for the Air Force as well. Why keep it chained to the Navy, a fast-fading strategic force?

Of course the Navy wants to retain the Corps "for service on armed vessels . . . protection of naval property at naval stations and bases." In that case, the newly established U. S. Air Force is entitled to the same type of services. If the law ties the Marine Corps exclusively to the Navy, why not a corresponding U. S. Paratroop Corps within the Department of the U. S. Air Force? But there is no such provision in the law.

IV

The accent in the Eberstadt-Forrestal documents is on economy. Obviously no one can quarrel with more efficient administration and the economies it can bring us. Everybody is against extravagance, just as everyone is against sin.

But true economy is not achieved

by paring here and there, though that too is desirable. *True economy is inseparable from proper strategy.* If the entire program is based on waste, retention of superfluous weapons and forces, the maintenance of obsolescing forces in their traditional splendor, then the minor savings through efficient housekeeping become meaningless.

Suppose you live on a lake-front, but must do your shopping in a village a few miles down the shore. You maintain a horse, a car and a boat. Suddenly you are obliged to economize. Would it not be silly to underfeed your horse, keep your boat leaky and cut down on oil for the car? Would it not be more sensible to maintain only one means of transport — the one that you judge most efficient — in perfect order?

To solve the problem of intolerable security costs, the American people must choose the decisive instrument of victory and channel their available resources into it. Efficiency may save us millions — but only a streamlined strategy that eliminates outlived weapons and methods will save us those *billions*.

Secretary Forrestal has pointed to savings of some \$32 million through more intelligent methods, reduced duplications, etc. That's all to the good. But in relation to a \$15 billion budget, such economies are trivial.

Only the free, democratic development of proper strategy will answer the economy question. If we insist on building the world's greatest Army,

Navy and Air Force — in fact two Air Forces — at the same time, we shall be heading for bankruptcy no matter how many savings are made by administrative efficiency. A profligate strategy beyond our means can be enforced only by the severest compulsion; it must lead to regimentation.

According to Mr. Forrestal's own estimate, the present land-sea-air strategy calls for an investment of about ten dollars in surface support for every dollar put into air power. Roughly equal appropriations for the three services, therefore, mean either that the Air Force is being scandalously over-financed or the other forces scandalously under-financed.

The plain truth is that even rich America does not possess enough wealth, labor power and resources to implement — against a country like Russia — the triphibious strategy which was well within our means when Japan was the enemy. If we try to do it notwithstanding, we shall be obliged to take it out of our living standards and ultimately out of our free political and economic system. In trying to be strong in all things at once, we shall end up without enough strength for victory in the primary force, which is strategic air power.

The Hoover Commission, whose job was to recommend tax-saving improvements in the operation of government, applied to the military establishment the same criteria it did to the Post Office and other Federal agencies. Strategy was not its con-

cern, particularly since it seemed clearly fixed in the Security Act itself. The confusion in the Eberstadt findings is, therefore, at least understandable.

But Mr. Forrestal, speaking for the entire military setup, has no such excuse. In putting the stress on efficiency and economy, while bypassing strategic considerations, he was reflecting the more reactionary segment of our military leadership. Certainly he was not consciously trying to mislead the public. Yet we find him repeatedly making misleading statements in his eagerness to defend the land-sea-air thesis. His instinct throughout is to soft-pedal the Air Force while building up the Navy. A few examples should suffice.

(1) In the statement quoted above, the Defense Secretary states that it would be folly to assume "that a war could be won by any single weapon"; that he "cannot visualize a situation in which any one of the services would operate independently." One finds it hard to believe that Mr. Forrestal doesn't know the difference between a weapon and a military force. Naturally, no single weapon can achieve victory; this is an elementary truism. But a strategic force by definition can and has won wars. To lump them together as if they were equivalent is to reveal unmitigated confusion. Its effect is to discount the vital new fact: that a single strategic force — namely, air power — under the new technical conditions can by its own efforts enforce surrender.

(2) "I likewise hold the view," he wrote at one point, "that carriers and naval air will have a part to play in any war of the foreseeable future. The time may come when both the carrier and the long-range bomber are obsolete weapons, but that time has not yet arrived."

True enough, the time may come. But consider the unfairness of lumping together the carrier and long-range aviation, as if their usefulness can be expected to expire at about the same time. The carrier, being merely an artificial extension of aircraft range, is already becoming obsolete with the emergence of trans-oceanic range, whereas the long-range bomber is first coming into its own.

His statement is as misleading as if, at the turn of the century, someone had asserted that the horse and the automobile some day may both become obsolete because of the advent of the airplane; and had argued that the horse and the automobile should therefore be given equal attention in the development of transportation! The horse was already obsolescent as a primary means of transportation, while the automobile was in its early dynamic stage of growth. Even thus, Mr. Forrestal overlooked the fact that the carrier will have been dead as the dodo long before the global strategic air force is superseded by some other military means.

(3) At another point he described a new American submarine which "can be anywhere within an area of 1000 square miles" in one hour. To

the casual reader this conveys the impression of terrific underseas speed. Actually, of course, 1000 square miles represents the area of a circle with a radius of less than 18 miles. To reach the farthest point from the center of the circle in one hour, a submarine would require the "terrific" speed of not quite 18 miles per hour. Had Mr. Forrestal said this simply, it would have been quite unimpressive; by ringing in the 1000 square miles, he created the feeling of almost supersonic naval speeds. Even if it is unconscious, it betrays anxiety to "sell" the Navy.

(4) The report demands that "policy control" be concentrated in the hands of the Defense Secretary in three specific fields: "military budget, legislation and public relations." Clearly those are the fields in which basic strategy finds expression. Nowhere in the document is there a direct and forthright recommendation that one man, the Secretary, should be entrusted with the final decisions on fundamental strategy. The American people would then have known the shocking measure of military regimentation being propagated. Mr. Forrestal chose to make the same recommendation indirectly, thus adding another dimension of confusion to his report.

(5) The country, the report asserts, "should have a background against which to measure the arguments of both sides" in the controversy between the Navy and the Air Force over aerial missions. This is a

sentiment which every American will applaud.

One wonders, nevertheless, how Mr. Forrestal in his own mind squares this generalization with his concrete proposals for shutting out the public so far as the detailed arguments of the contending services are concerned. He would exclude the Secretaries of the three services from the over-all National Security Council. He would impose "policy control" over public relations; in fact, the Department has already forced the services to clear all their press releases and speeches with its central office. Above all, he would rescind the provision which now enables the individual service heads to present their case to the President and Congress, as Secretary Symington so courageously did on the issue of the 70-group Air Force.

Should his proposals be put into effect, they would effectively remove issues of basic strategy from the public view. They would be treated as internal departmental questions — this at a juncture in military history when maximum public understanding and participation in the major decisions are essential.

Examples could be multiplied if space permitted. They indicate that Mr. Forrestal does not approach the crucial strategic problems of our time with an open mind, but rather as the ardent partisan of the old surface strategy. This alone should drive home the danger of endowing him or his successor with final power.

The Eberstadt group stressed that

"civilian control of the military establishment must be clearly established and firmly maintained." In this everyone who values our democratic way of life will concur. The same report, however, supported the Secretary's demand for absolute centralized authority without betraying any sense of the contradiction.

Apparently the Hoover subcommittee labored under the familiar illusion that a civilian top official guarantees civilian control, as if a dictator in mufti were any less a dictator than one in uniform. Hitler was no more a military man than Forrestal, but there was no room for civilian influence in his military machine. The essence of civilian control is in popular participation in the over-all decisions. When one man exercises regimented power, it is hypocritical to talk of civilian control, even if he has never worn a military uniform.

If we are to prevent the freezing of strategy under the dominance of Maginot-minded leadership, if we are to head off the bankrupting of our economy through the stockpiling of superfluous forces and weapons, the great debate over methods of war-making must not be suppressed by bureaucratic controls. In the final analysis the decisive choices must be made by the people through their Congress. Tactics and weapons are the province of military specialists, but the formulation of strategy, like basic foreign policy, is the province of the people.

WOMEN HAVE NOTHING TO KICK ABOUT

BY WAVERLEY ROOT

A FEW months ago a number of psychiatrists and psychologists popped up simultaneously and coincidentally with a small library of books devoted to answering the question: What is the matter with the modern American woman?

There seemed to be no necessity for proving that *something* was the matter with the modern American woman. That was assumed as an axiom, whose self-evident truth the modern American woman is engaged in demonstrating every day. She even admits it herself. She is inclined to attribute the trouble to factors outside of herself. The psychologists took a different view. They thought it came from within.

With a unanimity seldom attained in this particular approximate science, the probers of womankind found the root of her disturbance in that apparent necessity for happiness, the knowledge that one is *needed*. The American woman today, they told us, is downcast because she is useless. Technological advance and the enter-

prise of the dealers in electrical appliances have left her nothing to do. She realizes that she is no good to anyone, and, being a well-meaning creature, she broods about it.

Precisely at the moment when the experts were thus concurring in the opinion that woman's discontent stems from the fact that she serves no useful purpose, Mrs. Edith M. Stern came along, with remarkably unfortunate timing, to insist improbably that "Women Are Household Slaves" (THE AMERICAN MERCURY, January 1949).

I do not suppose that the psychologists will be particularly surprised at this example of the phenomenon of inversion, with which they are abundantly familiar. It is a common trick of the unconscious, when it finds itself burdened with a self-accusation, to attempt to defraud the conscious of participation in its guilty knowledge by shouting loudly that the facts of the case are the exact opposite of what it suspects them to be.

Thus Mrs. Stern's unconscious is uneasy because it thinks she is not

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pulling her share of the family load. It is attempting to slug her conscience over the head by trumpeting her preposterous thesis in public. The ostensible idea is to convince the public that woman is overburdened. The real purpose, I strongly suspect, is to convince herself.

I have no doubt the latter aim has been served. She has probably convinced herself — her conscious self anyway. She hasn't convinced me.

II

I suspect that the reason Mrs. Stern and her sisters complain so volubly these days about being overburdened is precisely because time hangs so heavily on their hands that they have the leisure to examine their lot and bewail it publicly. There was a time when women really were household slaves, but in those days they didn't complain about it. That was partly because they considered it normal that women should work hard, just as their husbands did.

Writer Mary Ross noted 'way back in 1931 that the American assumption that women should live a life of idleness and had every right to become bitter if they were denied that boon was a brand new conception of the relative rôles of husband and wife. "Slowly, almost unconsciously," she wrote in an article entitled "The New Status of Women in America,"

there was evolved through the last century in this country a middle-class philosophy that the man's work should support the family. This is something new in the

history of mankind. The work of the world never has been done by one sex unaided. . . . Only in very recent times has it been possible for a people to live without the work of most of the children; and still more recently has arisen the idea that most middle-class Americans accept as a matter of course that the women as well should be exempt from the need to share in the economic support of the family. Europeans still look with surprise at the unoccupied wives of hard-working American businessmen.

I don't know how Mrs. Stern manages to stretch her housewife's day (I am thinking of that American standard, the middle class woman, of course, as presumably she was also) over fourteen hours. Only the most ingenious complication of simple tasks and the most remarkable inefficiency would seem to make that possible. The era when "woman's work is never done" is definitely over, at least for us who live in the United States, the land of daily miracles. I do not speak as the aloof male, accustomed to underestimating the demands of housework because he is unfamiliar with them. I speak as a man who for more than a year now has been doing all the housework for himself and his small daughter in addition to his own normal tasks, without finding it any unsupportable burden.

Suppose we look back 50 years or so and compare the lot of the generally rather contented women of that period with the situation of their discontented sisters of today. The first duty of the old-time housewife was to feed her family. Every dish she put on the table had to be prepared by

her own hands, from the very beginning of the process, without any of the packaged shortcuts now available at every grocery store. She baked her own bread. The quality of the commercial loaf has now killed the art of home baking, regrettably; for though baker's bread is now too good to make it worthwhile to take the trouble to make it at home, it still cannot touch the homemade product, which I am not too young, at 45, to recall. This bread was not baked in a gas or electric oven. It went into a coal or wood range, requiring frequent stoking, or, a little later, into an oil stove, which was no marvel of automatism either.

When grandmother made pies, she prepared the crust herself, having previously made her own mincemeat or cut up her own apples. Today she can buy the crust ready mixed, requiring the addition only of water. She gets her mincemeat out of a jar also — and very good mincemeat it is too. The acme of this process is the apple pie pack which contains ready-made crust in one compartment, the prepared apples in another, and, nestling coily within the latter, a final container of seasoning, ready to be sprinkled over the whole. Ready-mixed cakes are also obtainable and it is superfluous to mention pancake flour. I have tried all these labor-saving concoctions but I have also (and I know a good many modern women who can't say as much) experimented successfully with making my own pancakes, cake and pies from the ground up. (I did buy

ready-made mincemeat; but the apples in my apple pies I not only made ready for the sacrifice, but grew and picked. They came off my own trees.)

Not only was the can opener unknown in the old time kitchen, it was at first abhorred by the conscientious housewife, who looked upon the early canned foods as immoral, a call to her to forsake the path of duty and cease insuring the excellence of her family's food by conducting it herself through the processes intervening between production and consumption. Today many women produce virtually all of their meals out of cans, easily and quickly, except for the meat course; and they can get that out of cans too if their husbands will put up with it.

With the advent of frozen foods, the preparation of dinner has become even simpler. It isn't necessary any more even to take the trouble of converting a packaged apple-pie into its destined form. You can get the pie complete, frozen into eternal goodness until you are ready to end its state of suspended animation. Add the pressure cooker, which does an hour's cooking in three minutes, and you have come pretty close to eliminating toil from cookery.

There are still the dishes, of course. Unless you are willing to resort to the rather horrible subterfuge of paper plates, that task still remains. Not so many years ago, dish washing began by heating the water on a stove, probably in a reservoir from which it could only be extracted at the price of considerable effort. Now the house-

wife turns on the tap. Her ancestor proceeded to clean her crockery with soft soap which she had previously made herself. The modern woman is aided by soap flakes of monosyllabic names and magical properties (so I learn from the commercials). Very often she has a dish-washer which reduces her own labor to scraping the residues of food off the plates and submitting them to the processes of the machine. The garbage resulting from this action is likely to go into a mechanical disposal unit; she doesn't have to be bothered with garbage cans. Finally, the hardest articles to wash, the pots and pans, are now of shiny aluminum, which rejects dirt with comparative ease. The old-time housewife had to struggle with utensils of iron.

III

We come now to the care of the family clothes.

The woman of the 1800s scrubbed the family wash, all of it, by hand, using for that purpose a large tub and a corrugated washboard. This last implement sang its swan song in the 1920s in washboard bands. She then hung the laundry out to dry, gathered it in again, and ironed it with a heavy iron which had to be heated, at frequent intervals, on the range.

Her modern counterpart, if she washes the family clothes at all, tosses them into an electrical machine and forgets about them for a while. She does her ironing with a light, continuously hot, electric iron and han-

dles the larger pieces with a mangle. In a considerable proportion of cases, especially if she lives in a city, she doesn't even do this. She sends the laundry out. Lately she has been provided with a new and delightful toy in the automatic laundry, to which she can take her washing and wait for the machine to do it for her, while gossiping with the other household slaves who are likewise waiting for the genie electricity to finish their tasks for them. One thing of which woman would seem to have little need is increased opportunity for gossip, but need it or not, she is getting it.

Up to the 1900s, the care of the family clothes did not end with washing them. A good part of them were made by the housewife, but the art of the needle is dying out now. There is not much point in making Mary's dresses or John's shirts when the stores can provide them so cheaply and in such quality. Even mending is on the decline, for badly torn garments are simply discarded for new ones. Mother does not get out the kerosene and a clean rag to keep father's suits tidy. They go to the dry cleaner's. Perhaps the most disagreeable of the jobs which come under the heading of keeping the family clothed has been almost completely eliminated in towns of any size: there are diaper services now.

The care of children has become a much simpler matter than it used to be fifty years ago. Parents may, and do, get them out from under their feet when they are not in school by

sending them off alone to the movies, with remarkably little attention to the sort of fare they are afforded there, and with so little instruction in elementary good manners that attendance at a Saturday matinée is now virtually ruled out for adults. A new profession, that of the baby-sitter, has come into being so that women need no longer be tied down to home while their children are young. (The woman of 1850 would have been horrified at the idea of leaving her children in care of a stranger for no other reason than that she wanted to amuse herself during the evening.) It is no longer necessary for the mother to be a combination nurse and doctor. The schools keep a watchful eye on the health of children, and professional care for them is more readily obtainable than it has ever been before.

IV

The mother's task has been lightened not only by the changed conditions of modern life, but also by a partial strike against child-bearing. Half a dozen used to be a normal number of children to a family. (There were five in my own.) Nowadays a woman who has had one or two thinks she has done her whole duty to society, and, in compensation for what she considers her sacrifice, expects her husband to pay her the homage of eternal gratitude and (more practically) lifelong support. A great many married women, by choice, have no children at all. In some cases, they are afraid. In a

great many others, they are simply too lazy and too selfish to take the trouble.

This attitude, so common among women today, seems to me to indicate a very great degeneration of the species, an abnegation of their femininity, a denial of life. It seems to me that if I were a woman, provided with the machinery for child bearing, I would no more willingly go to my death childless than, as a man, I would welcome the prospect of a life of celibacy. If in the brief time allowed us we are not going to accept and exploit to the full the experiences which life offers, why bother to go through the feeble motions of half-life at all? Why not reject life at once, completely, utterly and quickly, rather than let it drag by untasted?

But a more practical reason for returning to child-bearing might be put before American women. It provides them an opportunity for regaining lost ground. Since the American woman has expressed the opinion that she can do anything as well as men, and has invaded all the masculine fields without proving it, her grip has begun to slip. She still dominates the browbeaten male in this country but there are signs that he is getting ready to revolt. It has now become clear that, with only one exception, men can do everything better than women. Nature has neglected to supply the men with facilities for parturition. I suggest to the ladies that, before it is too late, they begin again to practice child-bearing, the one activity in which they can be certain of demon-

strating superiority over the male.

In making this suggestion, I am quite aware of the fact that modern conditions, economic and environmental, tend to reduce the size of the family quite independently of the voluntary acts of women. I think it seems obvious today to most persons not obfuscated by theological or military considerations that parents should not give birth to more children than they can provide for. I am not advocating a return to the enormous families of the nineteenth century which really did make household slaves of women. If I think more women ought to have more children, it is because I am concerned about their own emotional balance, about their fulfilment of their own potentialities, about the satisfactions which I think many of them are missing now.

There can be no doubt that woman overdid her function as a producer of progeny in the bad old days. But the pendulum has now swung very definitely in the other direction. A clue to the change has been provided innocently in Mrs. Stern's article, which is copiously provided with refutations of her own argument. It resides in her early employment of the word "widower."

It has a nice antiquarian ring. How long is it since, in contemporary writing, you have seen that word in print? How long since you have heard it in conversation? It is almost obsolete. The reason is that the thing which it represents is almost extinct. We have plenty of widows today, but

the widower is a rare bird indeed. Wives outlive their husbands. The insurance companies base their premiums on this fact, indisputably recorded in their actuarial tables.

This is not an invariable circumstance, the result of a greater natural vitality in women, like the quality which grants girl babies a better chance of surviving infancy than boy babies. A century ago the exact opposite was true. Look up the vital statistics of that time and you will find patriarchs who have outlived two or three wives each, acquiring new mates not after the presently popular process of divorce, then an unthinkable scandal and often a legal impossibility, but after the deaths of their predecessors. The same statistics will reveal also why this was the age of widowers and not of widows, why the men lasted longer than the women. These wives who died comparatively young had produced perhaps a dozen children each before death. They had literally worn themselves out through child-bearing and the subsequent toil of caring for their broods.

Sometimes the exceptional statistic, the one which seems to contradict what most of its fellows assert, throws more light on a situation than the figures which fall docilely into place as we expect them to. There is a significant exception to the rule that women are hardier than men — their lesser resistance to diabetes. The death rate from diabetes is nearly 75 per cent higher for women than for men. Actually this is a reaction

peculiar to married women (that is, the group which, according to Mrs. Stern, are household slaves). The death rate for married women is twice that for single women. Have we here a symptom of the dire effects upon them of that slavery of which Mrs. Stern complains?

Not according to the doctors. Diabetes is a peculiar sort of disease, which does not, like so many others, strike at those who overdo. How do the doctors explain the greater incidence of fatalities from diabetes among the married household slaves? In these unfeeling terms: "Married women are overfed and underexercised." (See C. Lester Walker's article, "A Million Unknown Diabetics," in the January 1949 *Harper's*.)

v

The reversal of the widow-widower balance is not the result alone of a lessening of the woman's burden; it is due also to an increase in the man's. Woman's gains have been made partly at man's expense.

This has happened in two ways. First of all, during the last fifty years the increasing use of machinery to lighten domestic work has not been paralleled by any increasing use of machinery to lighten men's work. It is true that there has been great technological advance in industry as well as in the home; but it has not been of the sort which reduces the effort of the operator of the machinery. Probably the most conspicuous development in factories during this

period has been the growth of the assembly line. This speeds up production but it lifts no burden from the worker. Psychologically, indeed, the change from artisanship to the monotony of repeating endlessly a single uninspiring operation has made the factory worker's task much more onerous.

And second, the shift of part of the burden of housework from the wife to the husband has been achieved by the fact that the machines which release her from a large part of her previous drudgery have to be paid for by extra money earned by an increase in his drudgery. It is considered quite normal for a husband to produce \$30 to spare his wife the exhausting effort of manipulating an egg-beater. This may represent a third of his week's pay, or a half, or even all of it. Considering that the egg-beater is used rather infrequently in the modern can-opener-equipped home, and then for no more than a few minutes each time, I imagine it might take a number of years before the amount of time and effort saved by the wife equals that expended by her husband in earning the price of an electric mixer (by which time some new and more expensive gadget will have come along to replace it).

Thus while the status of women has changed for the better, the status of men has correspondingly declined. Having ceased to share to any great extent the labor connected with maintaining a family, the housewife has come to accept as natural the view

of her husband as primarily a provider, a view which follows logically enough from his assumption of all the functions connected with that description. Corrupted besides by a growing tendency to turn all her responsibilities over to him, she has come to look upon him as a provider not only of goods, but also of services. He has become her errand boy, her chauffeur and her domestic servant. In the days when women were really busy and could have used some assistance around the house with profit, it did not occur to them that the male should be asked to add further exertions to his own hard day's work when he came home tired in the evening. The wife was probably tired too, but she had a good hot meal waiting for him and considered that he had earned the right to read his paper in comfort while she did the dishes. Today she asks him to help with the dishes so that she can hurry out to an evening meeting of the woman's club she has joined to kill some of the time which hangs heavy on her hands, leaving him to watch the baby. If there is no baby, he may find, when he returns wearily from his day's work, not a wife, but a note instructing him how to go about getting his own dinner. There was one thing about the previous era. It was at least *Life With Father*. Today it is very often a case of *Life Without Mother*.

I would like to append here a small personal footnote, a minute detail but, I think, a significant one. It is assumed of the American male that it

is his duty, when accompanying a lady, or even his wife, who has been shopping, to come gallantly to her aid and carry her parcels. I do not carry parcels. This is not because I am naturally churlish or was improperly reared by my American female relatives, who did, indeed, subject me to the usual indoctrination. It is because my wife is a European. She refuses to let me carry parcels. She does not like to see a man carrying parcels. She finds it an affront to the dignity of the male.

Sneer if you will at this attitude as a relic of woman's age of subjection. Aside from my own hearty concurrence in being relieved of parcel carrying, I take another view of the matter. I think the American woman has reduced her demands in the way of husbands. She wants a servant — a parcel carrier. The European woman wants a man.

The American woman is not to be blamed uniquely for this disregard of the factor of dignity, male or otherwise. This is another word which, like widower, has come to have a faintly musty odor. We do not think often of dignity in the United States today, and what little shreds of it remain are being rapidly worn away by the zanies who preside as masters of ceremony on the giveaway shows of the radio. But male dignity, as distinguished from human dignity in general, has been eaten away in these parts chiefly by the women. In the process, they have eliminated the greater part of their own.

WILLIAM FOSTER AND THE REVOLUTION

BY BENJAMIN GITLOW

ONE day in 1922, shortly after I had finished serving a three-year prison term for Communist activities, I attended a secret meeting of the Party underground in New York City. Three other men were present at that meeting: William Foster, a comparative newcomer to the Party but already in a high position; C. E. Scott, a Soviet spy who had brought Foster into the Party; and Earl Browder. These men and myself, closeted in a dingy back room on the lower East Side, made up the Communist Party's Political Committee of the Underground, which was, in effect, the ruling bureau of the American CP. For the Party was illegal in those days, and existed only as a conspiratorial, underground movement.

This was the first time I had ever met Foster, and I looked at the man with some curiosity. The Party, I had heard, was expecting big things of him: Moscow had ordered him to keep his membership in the CP a strict secret, and the Communists I knew were privately talking about

him as a man of mystery. I saw a thin, fair-complexioned man, neatly dressed in a dark, conservative business suit. His facial expression, then and at subsequent meetings, alternated mostly between bitterness and a kind of mournfulness. He rarely relaxed in a smile, even when he was making an attempt at humor — his humor tended to be on the earthy side — and except when he flew into one of his occasional tantrums he avoided displaying any emotions. On this particular day, and in similar meetings over a period of several years, Foster allowed Browder to do most of the talking for him. When he did speak himself, it was in a low, barely audible voice. We got the impression that he was not quite sure of himself, that he was proceeding cautiously, feeling out the men around him, and trying rather uncertainly to get his feet on firmer ground. It was obvious that he was not a happy man.

Foster's career up to that time had given him good reasons for feeling insecure. At the age of 41 he had ac-

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quired a reputation as something of a drifter. He had already taken a fling at virtually everything that American radicalism had to offer, and had met only with rebuffs and frustrations. Beginning in his childhood as a devout Catholic, he had steadily bent his efforts further to the left. He had been, in succession, a Bryan Democrat, a member of the Socialist Party, a Wobbly, and an anarcho-syndicalist. In the years immediately before he joined the Communist Party his main ambition had been to wrest control of the AFL leadership from the "labor fakers," as he called them, who dominated the organization. When his firebrands were finally crushed by the Gompers leadership in 1920, Foster had appeared about ready to repudiate his revolutionary past. In a pathetic appearance before a Senate Investigating Committee he had cringed and pleaded, in a meek voice, "I am one who was raised in the slums. . . . I have no teachings or principles."

It was at this time, when Foster's career as a radical seemed to be coming to an inglorious end, that the Kremlin had decided he could be useful to the Bolshevik cause. In the three years following the November Revolution, Foster had been too busy trying to capture the AFL to take much notice of the burgeoning American Communist movement. The Communists, however, had been watching him closely; and they had paid special attention to his Trade Union Educational League, the or-

ganization with which, in 1920, he was still vainly trying to catapult himself into the leadership of American trade unionism. Moscow decided to bring the TUEL into its own camp, and to use Foster as a lever for Bolshevizing the American proletariat.

"The frail newly-born Trade Union Educational League," Foster later recalled, "faced a most unpromising struggle for existence. It seemed fated to join its luckless predecessors." And then, suddenly, the impoverished Foster had found himself being hailed by the Soviet government as an outstanding revolutionary hero and a great radical trade unionist. A man named Carl Johnson, a former member of the Lettish section of the American CP, who operated under the alias of C. E. Scott, had been given the assignment of attracting Foster into the Communist orbit. Scott had played on Foster's vanity, fired his ambition, promised him that the Bolsheviks would place the whole might of the Soviet State behind his campaign to gain control of the AFL. The bankrupt TUEL had been promised subsidies of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Foster had not needed much convincing. It had been quickly arranged that he would head a delegation of three — Earl Browder and Ella Reeves Bloor were the other two — to represent the TUEL at the first World Congress of the Profintern, or Red Labor International. Bought and paid for, the three pilgrims had arrived in Moscow for the

Congress early in 1921. Both Browder, who had conceived an attachment bordering on hero-worship for Foster, and Ella Reeves Bloor, had been Communists for several years. Foster joined the Party while he was in Moscow. Under Lenin's guiding hand, Foster, Robert Minor and Sidney Hillman (who was attending the Congress as an observer, rather than as a delegate) worked out the strategy by which the American CP was to capture the AFL. A plan was devised for Hillman and other non-Communist progressives to pry open the door and permit Communist infiltration.

Heavily subsidized with funds, Foster had returned to the United States with a great new career in trade unionism apparently opening up before him. He had been immediately co-opted into the Central Committee of the underground Communist Party, made a member of its Political Committee, and given charge of the Party's trade union department. It was then that the meeting described above, at which I first met the man, took place.

II

Foster never did come close to capturing control of the AFL. Sidney Hillman, after thinking over the promises he had made to Lenin and Foster, decided not to keep them. The Gompers leadership continued to prove too strong for the Communists to crack. Foster began to realize that he had sacrificed his inde-

pendence not for a position of power and prestige, but for the rôle of a Party hack. He became a slave to a revolution that never came off, a man whose disappointments and frustrations mounted in an endless succession. He has never been the real leader of the American Communist Party — much less of this country's working class — and after 28 years of toil in the CP he can look back on a career in which his masters in Moscow have never even treated him with decent respect. The Russians learned quickly that Foster was a weakling, and they have dealt with him accordingly. No other American Communist has been double-crossed by the Kremlin more than Foster has.

The leaders of the Communist movement are not robots, nor are they men and women out of another world. They are the earth's children, with their own shares of passions, prejudices, ambitions — and weaknesses. From the day that Foster was born he has been struggling for his very existence against a world that was, to him, hostile and implacably cruel. (His mother had borne 23 children, of which only he and two others survived; and he has been afflicted for much of his life by tuberculosis and a serious heart condition.) By sheer grit and determination he had educated himself and carved out a career in which he believed he could fight against the sort of conditions under which he had grown up. One would think that a man like this, a man who had over-

come so many handicaps and lived so roughly, would be strong. And yet, though Foster wanted to be strong, and though he assumed attitudes and poses to create an impression of strength, he always faltered where strong men would be firm. Whatever independence of spirit he had once had was quickly broken after he joined the Communist Party.

In Foster's early years in the Party the great source of his weakness, aside from his previous failures as an independent radical, was the fact that he had delayed so long in joining the movement. Although his views as a syndicalist had not really been so different from the Communist thinking of that period, he became obsessed by the idea that he had been too late, that he could never make up for the years in which he had ignored the Soviet Revolution. In a morbid, neurotic way, he would indulge in fantasies about being "passed by" when the Revolution should come to America. (There were never any doubts that it must come.) He often used to tell his Communist friends, in those early days, of an incident which had occurred prior to his joining the Party. He had been spending an evening with a few anarchist friends at the home of the widow of one of the martyrs of the Haymarket Affair. The group was heatedly discussing just how and when the coming Revolution would destroy American capitalism. Suddenly the strains of martial music and the shouting of people were heard from the street.

The widow parted the curtains and looked out. "What's all the rumpus about?" Foster asked her. "Don't you know?" she answered sarcastically. "That was the Revolution you were arguing about passing by." For Foster the moral of that story was that he must never be caught napping by the Revolution. When it comes he must be prepared, in a position to do something about it; in other words, he must be at the head of the Communist Party. It is this strange obsession of Foster's, this fear of being "passed by" on the great day of judgment, that explains his cringing acceptance of all the hard knocks inflicted on him by the Kremlin. He knows that he can never quit.

The first great blow fell in 1923, just after the Party Convention in Chicago. At that Convention Foster had an undisputed majority of the delegates, and he had reason to believe that he might be named general secretary. However, he was afraid to use his strength against Charles E. Ruthenberg, then leader of the Party, because Ruthenberg was known to be popular in Moscow. Later, when Foster tried to get the Comintern's permission to oust Ruthenberg, he was told bluntly that, despite his own majority, Ruthenberg must not be removed.

At the 1925 Convention, Foster again had a majority of the delegates. This time he intended to use that majority and oust Ruthenberg. But just before Foster was preparing to accept the leadership he was ap-

proached by one Gussev, a Comintern Representative and a personal friend of Stalin's. Gussev confronted Foster with a cablegram from Moscow that read:

Ultimatum to Majority that Ruthenberg must remain as secretary. . . . Ultimatum to Majority to refrain from making removals displacements and dispersions against Minority. . . . If Majority does not accept these demands . . . Communist International proposes then only a temporary Central Executive Committee with equal representation for both groups and a neutral chairman to be elected to call a new convention after passions have died down. Those who refuse to submit to this decision will be expelled.

In the face of this bombshell Foster collapsed. He threw up his hands, and in a voice choked with emotion, his eyes bloodshot and his cheeks burning crimson, he capitulated completely. He offered to withdraw entirely from the Party leadership and have Ruthenberg declared winner by majority vote. But Gussev would not allow even that. He called Foster a coward, upbraided him for trying to shirk responsibility, and insisted on the formation of a new Executive Committee that would have 50 per cent representation from the Foster Majority and 50 per cent from the Ruthenberg Minority, with Ruthenberg staying on as Party boss. Foster wilted under the attack. He slumped in his chair. Like a lost, shipwrecked man he stared blankly at Stalin's emissary. His hair disheveled, his fingers nervously searching the creases and folds of his trousers, he

looked as though he had lost everything. He accepted the decision.

But the infamy against Foster did not end there. The next day the newly-formed 50-50 Central Executive Committee met, with Gussev (who was operating in the United States under the alias of P. Green) as the neutral chairman. Gussev cast his vote with the Ruthenberg Minority, thereby giving it a Majority of one. With this help, Ruthenberg now re-organized the Party completely. All the leading posts, all the leading committees, and all the departments went to his own men. Foster, a thoroughly beaten man, had neither the courage nor the will to fight back. For the next few years he was without power in the American Communist Party.

III

Foster is a man without formal education. Because of the extreme poverty in which he grew up, he had to leave school at the age of ten and go to work. Throughout much of his youth he was a hobo, tramping more-or-less aimlessly about the country, working at all sorts of odd jobs, making just enough money to keep himself from starving. He was arrested several times for vagrancy. He has known the experience of begging for his meals, of nearly freezing to death, of being almost ground to pieces beneath the wheels of freight trains. When he was twenty he shipped out of Portland on a square-rigged sailing vessel, and for the next three years he sailed the high seas, visiting South

African, Australian and Latin American ports, and covering a total of 50,000 miles. At later periods in his life he worked fitfully at farming, logging, metal mining, railroad construction, and just about every other job that would come the way of a floating worker in the West. At one point he acquired a 320-acre homestead in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. He built himself a log cabin on the property, and spent two or three months there each summer. Finally he sold the homestead for a few hundred dollars.

During all these years of wandering he was trying desperately to educate himself; as far as possible he never stopped reading. An endless flow of radical literature passed in and out of his hands. He discovered, after a while, that he was able to hold his own most of the time in the world of left-wing polemics. But like most men who are wholly self-educated, Foster never quite got over a feeling of intellectual inferiority. Among the artful dialecticians and masterminds of American Communism he was made to feel especially uneasy.

He reacted to this feeling in a rather ambivalent way, almost to the extent that those close to him could detect symptoms of a split personality. He played two rôles. In his first rôle he was a hardened anti-intellectual. He would spend his free hours hanging around Communist club-rooms and meeting halls, gossiping about small matters with the rank and file. He liked, at these times, to

tell stories of his hobo past, of his experiences with the hoods and goons he had known in his trade union days. Or he would entertain the boys with loud, ribald humor, cleverly flavored from the rich stock of slang he had acquired in his youth. It was as though he were telling those around him that he had only contempt for the savants on Thirteenth Street. He was "one of the boys," not a stuffed shirt or a lily-livered bookworm. This anti-intellectual side of his personality won him a good deal of popularity among some impressionable rank-and-filers, and his influence played an important part in attracting certain new types of members into the Party. Especially in Chicago, where Foster's influence was greatest, a new kind of Communist began to put in an appearance: the outcast. The blue flannel workshirt, the leather jacket, the tilted cap, the slouch of the tough guy and the use of slang began to become parts of the Communist stereotype. The gunman and the slugger were idealized; the men who lived by intellectual pursuits were held in contempt.

But while Foster was being "one of the boys" to the rank and file he was simultaneously laboring to convince Moscow that he was an intellectual and theoretician of some importance. The Comintern position at this time was that Foster represented the trade union group in the American CP, while Ruthenberg represented the genuine Marxists, the politically sophisticated elements of the Party. It

was obvious to Foster that as long as this view of things was held in Moscow he was never going to gain real power in the United States. And so he began to send to the Kremlin a steady stream of, to him, new and significant theories about social affairs in America.

First he presented Moscow with a new theory about labor banks, in which he maintained that the capital accumulated by these banks could be used to overthrow capitalism in this country. Moscow ridiculed the proposition. Another of his theories held that capitalism had reached its apex in the United States, and that 1926 would be the year in which this country would begin to decline. Three years of unprecedented prosperity followed his prediction, and when the bust finally came it did not spell the end of capitalism. Foster then tried to explain the growth of American productive capacity, the prosperity of the country, the high wages, the conservatism of the unions, and the lack of proletarian militancy as a new phenomenon which he grandly called "capitalist efficiency socialism." The Comintern Marxists did not understand what he was talking about. All through the middle twenties Foster continued to develop these theories. They were all ignored or ridiculed by the Comintern, and he remained without real influence in the American Party.

During these years Foster surrounded himself with three men. The first of these was Jack Johnstone, a

blunt, stupid Scotchman, endowed with real physical courage and the stubbornness of a mule. Johnstone, whom Foster regarded as his closest friend, served mainly as his personal strongarm man. The second was Alexander Bittleman, a former secretary of the Jewish Section of the CP. Bittleman, who was known to irreverent rank-and-filers as "the Rabbi," was a thin, humorless, myopic man, completely without principles. Although it was impossible for Foster to like him personally, he was an important man to have around, because he spoke Russian fluently and was always well posted on any recent twists or convolutions in the Party line. The third man around Foster was Earl Browder. Ever since 1921 Browder had served as his errand boy, as a flunkie who answered at his beck and call, as a stooge whose only mission in the Party was that of glorifying Foster. Unfortunately for the latter, Browder finally grew out of this rôle. In the late twenties Browder was sent to China, where he did work for the Comintern and the GPU. Although his mission was not successful, his work seemed to give him confidence in his own ability, and by 1929 he was Foster's chief competitor in the Party.

IV

In 1929 Stalin administered the *coup de grâce* to Foster's ambitions and elevated Browder to leadership in the American Party. The details of this elaborate double-cross are worth re-

porting in detail: they reveal a lot about all of the participants involved.

The story begins in the summer of 1928, when Foster went to Moscow as a delegate to the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International. At this time Stalin was publicly supporting Bukharin as Chairman of the Comintern, but was privately building up a faction against him. One day during the Congress Stalin took Foster aside for a few minutes, and asked for his support in the coming fight against Bukharin. In return, Stalin promised, Foster would be awarded the leadership of the American CP.

Foster returned to the United States in high spirits, confident that after the 1928 Convention of the American Party he would, finally, be the general secretary. When the Convention opened, however, nothing seemed to work out as it should. The Majority leadership of the Party outfought and outsmarted Foster, and the man with Stalin's support — incredible as this sounds — found himself with only 10 per cent of the delegates on his side. Instead of acquiescing in Stalin's order to give the leadership of the Party to Foster, the Convention voted to send a delegation to Moscow and appeal the order. Foster made the trip too, intending to beg Stalin to live up to his promise.

When the showdown came, Stalin reneged; he refused to name Foster general secretary of the Party. All through 1929 a long series of hearings were held in Moscow on the Ameri-

can Party Question, as it was called. At these hearings Foster, to his intense dismay, found himself being criticized and excoriated by Stalin, Molotov, Manuilsky, and other Comintern bigwigs. After listening to these denunciations for several weeks, Foster began to grow panicky. Instead of insisting that Stalin keep his promise, he donned sackcloth and ashes, confessed his errors, and begged the Great Man's forgiveness. It was not forthcoming.

In the final speech of the hearings, Stalin laid into Foster with a viciousness that he has seldom displayed in public. He began by denying that he had ever made any promises to Foster, or displayed any sympathy for the Foster group. (This despite the fact that he had sent a cablegram and two special emissaries to the American Convention demanding Foster's election.) Standing at the lectern in the great Red Hall of the Comintern Building, which was then packed with the leading Communists from all over the world, Stalin looked straight at Foster and asked, with a visible sneer: "On what grounds is Foster pleased to think that I fail to see the defects of the Minority group and even sympathize with that group?" Foster did not speak up. To have answered Stalin he would have had to call Stalin a liar. What thoughts went through Foster's mind at that moment no one can know, but it is certain that they were not rebellious thoughts. To have rebelled would have meant expulsion, and expulsion — to his way

of thinking — might mean that “the revolution would pass him by.”

Stalin finally cleared up the tangle in the American Party by sending a Russian Communist to the United States to take full charge. When things had been straightened out, and the American CP was safely in Stalin’s pocket, he dusted off Browder, who had just finished making a mess of Comintern affairs in China, and appointed him general secretary. Foster’s ambitions disappeared beyond the crimson horizon, and the long reign of Earl Browder began in the American Communist Party. The former errand boy was now the master.

All through the 1930s, and until the war had ended in 1945, Browder ran the Party and Foster remained in the background. He performed the hack duties expected of a subordinate Communist official: expounding and glorifying every wiggle in the Party line, putting in appearances at Party rallies, writing for the *Daily Worker* and *New Masses*, debating, when he had a chance, against the anti-Communists. To a man of Foster’s temperament these must have been years of unvitiated misery.

Suddenly, in 1945, Foster was presented with an opportunity to wrest control from Browder. Jacques Duclos, the leading theoretician of the French CP, issued a broadside against Browder for having misinterpreted the Communist line on Teheran, and specifically for having dissolved the Party during the War (when it had

been known only as the Communist Political Association). Foster set out to make the most of the Duclos statement, which plainly reflected the opinion of the Kremlin. He succeeded in having Browder expelled from the ranks of American Communism (to become a paid agent of the Soviet government), and he succeeded in getting for himself the title of National Chairman. But in the revived Communist Party effective leadership slipped, once more, through Foster’s hands. He was 64 years old now; his chance had come too late. The real control of the Party passed to Eugene Dennis, a younger man who is intellectually, and in every other way, much the inferior of Foster.

William Foster is an old man now, who suffers painfully from his heart condition, and who must be growing weary of the struggle. He knows that his ambition of the past quarter-century — leadership of the American Communist Party — has slipped permanently out of his reach. But it is doubtful that he will ever stop playing the rôle of the devoted Communist. He will live out the rest of his days attacking Wall Street, the Marshall Plan and the United States, and exalting the USSR — the happy land of socialism, where all problems have been solved, and where a rejoicing people can bask in the warm glow of Stalin’s leadership.

Does Foster believe his own words? Of course not. He is well aware of the sufferings of the Russian people; he

knows of the never-ending frame-ups, purges and mass murders, of the secret police and the concentration camps. But if he could talk to you confidentially, he would say that these sufferings constitute the necessary price which a revolutionary generation has to pay. In the future, when Communism has triumphed the world over, all of these hardships will give way to perpetual peace and prosperity. If you remain uncon-

vinced he will politely advise you to wait and see if the future does not bear him out.

Foster probably has his moments of doubt. But these could occur only when he is alone, in communion with his dark soul, when bitter memories of the past agitate him. And these doubts must be quickly suppressed. He has given his life to a cause. He must hang on. The Revolution must not pass him by.

THE STONE CUTTER

BY ETHEL BARNETT DE VITO

It was for him to carve the worth,
The legend of men's days on earth,
To tell the world here lay its loss
Beneath the angel or the cross.

His it must be to wreath the claim
Of dignity around the name,
Nor let that chisel say it knew
That pain had been his portion too.

It seemed to him men did no more
Than write their names in sand or air
That wave or wind might well displace
Or wipe away without a trace,
So it was left to him alone
To mark their passing — and in stone.

THE HIGH COST OF SMALL LOANS

BY SAM SHULSKY & DON HASSELL

THE middle-class working people of this country — the families with incomes between \$2000 and \$4000 a year — are rushing into debt at a greater clip than ever before in history. Since the end of World War II their borrowings have doubled. Their total indebtedness, which is now close to \$15 billion, is at an all-time high, and the end is nowhere in sight. Literally millions of automobiles, homes, refrigerators and washing machines are still needed and/or wanted — and will be borrowed against. The all-cash automobile and home buyer of the easy-money war days has disappeared. Millions are being forced to borrow to keep abreast of the cost of living.

The chances are nine out of ten that a borrower will not be getting his money's worth. The interest he pays will be high. Rates of 30 to 40 per cent a year and up are commonplace — and for those who borrow from loan sharks the rate can go well above 500 per cent a year. It often does, in fact, pass the 1000 per cent represented by the \$5 weekly loan for

which you repay the shop's money-lender \$6 the following pay day — the famous "6-for-5" accommodation loan popular among the very poor. Then there are the hidden charges, recapture clauses involving possessions which played no part in the loan, garnishees, and assignments of wages, all of which can rise to torment the borrower who fails to repay on time. To say nothing of the brass-knuckle goon squads employed by some loan sharks.

Consumer credit is almost always a "blind" purchase and an expensive service — usually blindest and most expensive for the people who need it most. A recent survey of the small-loan and instalment-credit field yielded the startling fact that two thirds of all people who need between \$50 and \$300 in a hurry borrow blindly. They neither know nor take time to learn the rates of interest they must pay, what the total cost of their loans will be, what other sources are open to them, what protection they have in case of default. The reason for this blindness is obvious. The average

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small-loan borrower is at a tremendous disadvantage. His need for money is urgent. He is in no position to bargain, and the seemingly small payments he must make over a dozen months hardly bulk as large in his thinking as the lump sum that is put in his hand by the lender. Even if he were not harried, the task of finding out what he is paying for help in satisfying his creditors (or for enjoying a television set a year before he has the money to pay for it) is probably far beyond his business ken. Credit costs are more often than not expressed in a jumble of percentages added or deducted in advance; percentages applied to original loans, or to declining unpaid balances; or to special charges for investigation, insurance and registration.

Before the first mild laws for the protection of borrowers came on the books a generation ago, money-lenders were such barefaced robbers that in some cities men of substance banded together to form "remedial" loan societies. They organized pawn shops whose capital was furnished on a near-charity basis and whose profits were limited. Some of these societies still exist. In New York City the Provident Loan Society, established in 1894, charges borrowers an over-all rate of only 1 per cent per month on unpaid balances. But only a few dozen cities have such organizations.

II

Neither protective laws nor kind-hearted societies can help those who refuse to help themselves by shopping

around for their loans, by checking all the possible sources of credit before borrowing.

There are many such sources for the small-wage earner, and they range from the neighborhood racketeer who lends money directly from his wallet, and whose office is the corner saloon, to the ultra-respectable bank with assets anywhere up to \$6 billion. Yet a single rule governs all lending, and the rule offers small comfort to the average borrower: The man who needs the money less can get it easier and cheaper. There seems to be nothing that can be done about the rule. It is sanctioned by the Bible ("To him who hath shall be given and from him who hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath"), accepted as natural on Broadway ("A banker is a guy who is always ready to lend to anybody who doesn't need it"), and considered axiomatic by the lenders themselves. Thus the desperation and ignorance of the small borrower are in direct proportion to the rate of interest he is charged. The closer he is to the end of his fiscal rope the more he will be charged, and the more he will have to pledge as collateral. If a man pays 5 per cent interest he may be presumed to be well-informed and not too hard up. If he pays 1200 per cent he is probably poor and uneducated, and without much credit standing. (Credit standing is an all-embracing term which includes character, regularity of income, ability to live within that income, past record in meeting debts, and resources —

stocks, bonds, possibly a reserve fund built up in life insurance.)

In borrowing money from legitimate sources, there are several criteria by which one can judge the relative advantages of the terms. The wise borrower will apply all of them and check them against as many lending agencies as his standing allows him to approach.

First, there is the tricky problem of calculating how much the loan will cost. There are two approaches to measuring a charge for the rental of money — it can be figured in dollars and cents and in percentage rates. Both approaches can be deceptive.

If you borrow \$100 for one year, at the end of which you pay back \$106, you have paid a simple interest charge of 6 per cent. If the loan is due in six months, your interest charge — even though you make the same repayment — is 12 per cent.

The problem becomes more involved if (and this is a common transaction) you borrow the same \$100 under an agreement to repay \$106 in twelve equal instalments over the course of a year. In this case, your interest cost is not 6 per cent, but nearly 12, since the *average* debt on which you are paying interest is only slightly more than half the amount originally borrowed.

In many cases — including those where the commercial banks are the lenders — the interest is discounted, *i.e.*, it is deducted at the very start of the transaction. So that if you borrow \$100 at 6 per cent, you receive

only \$94, and if you repay your loan of \$100 in a lump sum at the end of twelve months your interest charge is not 6, but nearly 6.4, per cent. If you are expected to pay back the \$100 in twelve equal monthly instalments, you are actually paying nearly twice as much interest for the money.

Interest cost, then, is a matter not only of rate, but of time. The man who borrows should be certain in his own mind as to (1) how much money he is actually receiving, (2) how long he will have the use of it, and (3) how much he will have to repay. The suckers who borrow at what they conceive to be low rates, but who fail to get these vital details clear in their minds, are themselves responsible for most of the dishonest practices in the money-lending business.

III

The chief sources of legitimate consumer credit are: life insurance companies, commercial banks, pawn shops, small-loan companies, and stores which allow instalment purchasing.

The borrower who can put up something of value as bond for his loan is obviously in a favored position, and the more salable the collateral, the easier the terms of his loan will be. If, for example, he turns over 100 shares of U. S. Steel, worth around \$7000, to secure a loan of \$2000 to modernize his home, the lender, who is fully protected, can afford to cut his interest demands to a bare minimum. He will have to set aside little or no reserve for possible loss. But if the

borrower puts up a racing sloop and a summer home in the woods as collateral, the lender would have to consider the possible difficulty of disposing of them should the payments be defaulted on.

For this reason, those who can borrow money against insurance policies having a cash reserve value can obtain just about the lowest rates available for individual consumer credit. If you have a policy with a cash value standing at, say, \$2500, you can borrow up to that amount on it from your insurance company at a rate of 5 or 6 per cent. Most companies charge the higher rate for older policies, since the premiums on these policies were usually based on that scale of interest. In recent years most companies have included clauses in policies giving the insured the privilege of borrowing at 5 per cent; and a few insurance companies have reduced the rates on all policies to the lesser charge.

In any case, when you borrow against an insurance policy, you are, in effect, borrowing your own money, and you can count on good terms. If, for example, you borrow \$2000 to remodel your house, you pay only \$100 a year for as long as you keep the money, and a proportionately lower amount if you repay any. This is a straight charge of \$5 per \$100 per year, which is pretty cheap borrowing.

In recent years commercial banks have been so zealous in cultivating small-loan business that they now undersell even the insurance companies. It is possible to pledge your insurance

policy with a commercial bank and obtain a loan for as little as 3 per cent a year. However, a few commercial banks offer different and less attractive terms — including deduction of the interest at the beginning of the loan, monthly repayments, etc. In these instances it takes a lot of close figuring to decide whether, in the final analysis, you are actually getting a better deal. It should also be realized in borrowing against a life insurance policy, either at an insurance company or a bank, that if anything happens to the insured person during the period of the loan, the amount of the loan will be deducted from the policy before anything is turned over to the beneficiaries.

If you have no insurance policy against which you can borrow — or if you do not want to jeopardize your family's protection by having your insurance signed away for long periods of time — your best bet is the commercial bank. There are now 11,000 of these banks in the small-loan field.

Anyone who feels that it would be faintly ridiculous for him to walk into a marble-pillared, high-ceilinged institution with assets of anywhere from \$10 million to \$6 billion, and ask for a \$200 loan, can speedily rid himself of that feeling. The world's biggest banks today are actively seeking small business, and they are prepared to advance you as little as \$60 for any legitimate purpose. Nor does the fact that the bank stands prominently in the center of town mean that your

affairs will be any less private than if you walked up two flights to a small-loan office. Both lending institutions check exactly the same credit sources and go through the same procedures. The only difference is that the commercial bank, in return for charging a lower rate of interest, restricts its clientele to those it considers select risks. At New York City's Chase National Bank, for example, a small borrower would have to have a steady job with a reputable concern and a good credit record as an individual, *i.e.*, no unsettled judgments or garnishees. And his loan should not exceed 15 per cent of his annual income.

IV

Let us assume he qualifies, and arranges to borrow \$600 at Chase to modernize his kitchen. The cost of the loan would be worked out this way:

If he has stocks or bonds, or other negotiable investments to put up as security, the interest rate will be 4.5 per cent. This *does not* mean that he pays only \$4.50 for every \$100. In the first place, the interest is deducted from the amount he actually receives; so that after signing a note for \$600, payable, say, in twelve monthly instalments of \$50, he is given \$573. Furthermore, the repayment procedure means that the average amount of the money available to him during the year is only a little more than half the original loan. His interest cost is really just under 8.7 per cent.

If he had no collateral to offer, the amount deducted would have been \$30 (\$5 per \$100), and the interest cost would have been 9.7 per cent on an annual basis. In either case, however, this would still be cheap borrowing for the average man.

Anyone who cannot qualify for an insurance or commercial bank loan will find the personal-loan companies far more lenient in their credit demands, but rather more expensive in their interest charges. Licensed small-loan companies charge rates between 2.5 and 3.5 per cent a month on the unpaid balance. They do not, however, deduct the interest at the start of the transaction, so that you at least get all the money you sign up for.

A man who borrowed \$100 from one of the biggest of these companies, and repaid in monthly instalments over a year, would end up paying an interest rate of about 30 per cent. In an average transaction he would repay \$9.75 at the ends of twelve successive months, for a total of \$117. The \$17 represents to him the cost of a loan which started out at \$100 and, in the last month, was down to \$9.75. This comes to an average loan of a few cents under \$55 for the entire year. Dividing \$55 into \$17, we find he paid an interest rate of about 31 per cent for his money. If he had decided to borrow the \$100 for only six months, he would have repaid \$18.15 a month, or a total of \$108.90. In other words, he would have paid \$8.90 for the rental of approximately \$59 for a half year — which figures out to around

30 per cent interest. A larger amount, say \$300 (the maximum these companies may lend in many states), would have cost about \$45.84 in actual rental, which adds up to an interest rate slightly under 30 per cent.

The pawn shop, where you customarily pledge an article worth two to three times the amount of your loan, generally charges stiff rates. Anyone who wants to get hold of \$50 to repay a personal debt that can't wait, can, of course, wrap up that fine camera Uncle George brought back from overseas and take it to Willie-the-Lender. But he would be wise to check on the rates before turning it over. In many states the maximum allowed by law is 3 per cent a month for the first six months and 2 per cent on the next six for loans under \$100; and 2 and 1 per cent, respectively, for loans above that amount. The first charge figures out to 30 per cent interest, the second — which is harder to get — to only 18.

For those unfortunate would-be borrowers whose credit standing and lack of resources rule out any legal loans, there are the loan sharks. To borrow from them a man need have nothing to do with chattel mortgages or signed contracts, and he can have a prison record a yard long. The shark operates only with a "runner," who steers business to the boss, and a well-organized brass-knuckle squad. While the latter effectively enforces contracts and discourages those who would run to the district attorney crying usury, the boss exacts interest

costs running above 1000 per cent a year. Moreover, the loan shark's customers tend to keep paying for years, since the usual aim of these lenders is to get the borrower into debt and keep him there. If the sucker tries to repay part of his debt every week, and thus work himself out of this quicksand, he is told that he must repay the entire loan or none. If he falls behind in a payment he is "refinanced," *i.e.*, passed on to another company owned by the same gang, and charged a substantial refinancing fee. One unfortunate victim of these usurers finally called in the police last year, after he had been kept in slavery for ten years. In January 1939 he had borrowed \$20 to pay a medical bill. Every month thereafter until January 1948 he had renewed his loan. By that time he had paid \$1053 in interest for the use of the \$20, and he still owed the usurer more than he had borrowed.

v

Fully half the personal credit contracted for in this country is in the form of instalment buying. For thousands of families, the prices of automobiles, refrigerators, radios, furniture and other items bulk so large beside the weekly income that they can be had only on the instalment plan — at once the most popular and the least understood form of purchasing practiced in this country.

At its best — in the form of a department store charge account — instalment selling involves small articles

THE HIGH COST OF SMALL LOANS

Cost, in Dollars, of One-Year Straight Loan

Size of Loan	\$100.00	\$200.00	\$300.00
Insurance 5%	5.00	10.00	15.00
Insurance 6%	6.00	12.00	18.00
Pawn Shop	30.00	36.00	54.00

Cost of One-Year Loan to Be Repaid in Monthly Instalments

Size of Loan	\$100.00	\$200.00	\$300.00
Commercial Bank with Collateral	4.50	9.00	13.50
Commercial Bank without Collateral	5.00	10.00	15.00
Small Loan Company	17.00	31.96	45.84
Department Store Credit Accounts	12.00	24.00	36.00

carried for 30 to 60 days, with no increase in price. At its worst it adds up to shoddy merchandising at high prices, with trick recapture clauses and excessive interest. The old rule, *caveat emptor* — let the buyer beware — applies nowhere with more force than it does here. For not only must the buyer determine what he is being charged for the privilege of deferred payment on a \$300 radio, but he must also make certain that it really is a \$300 radio. While there is no good evidence that credit stores sell merchandise of less value than cash stores, differences in credit terms do make

any quality comparison more difficult.

A man who knowingly pays \$300 ("in twelve easy payments") for a radio which sells elsewhere for \$250 cash, and charges the extra \$50 off with a "so what — I didn't have the \$250 anyway," might do well to pause for a few computations. He is paying \$50 for the privilege of paying \$250 in twelve monthly instalments. Looked at another way, he is receiving a series of monthly loans whose average, for the year, is about \$135. When he pays \$50 interest for the year's loan of \$135, he is paying more than 37 per cent for his money.

He could probably do better by borrowing the money outright from a small-loan agency and paying cash.

Still better, he might have sought out those stores which do business on a one-price basis and make no charge for credit. Department-store and men's-clothing-store charge accounts are, of course, outstanding examples of month-to-month credit at little or no cost. It is worth making special efforts to keep these charge accounts in good shape. For not only do they provide an easy way to carry a credit charge from month to month, but they are excellent references which every credit agency will accept as a measure of financial character.

For anyone who still feels impelled to pay instalment fees on a large purchase, there are advantages to shopping around, to getting the lowest rates and the clearest contract. Suppose, for example, that a man buys a \$300 radio on which he can pay \$100 down. A fairly good charge would be 6 per cent for the \$200 balance, or \$12, which is paid when he hands over the \$100 down payment. He pays the balance in ten or twelve equal instalments. Dollarwise this amounts to a charge of only \$12; percentagewise it means not 6, but 12 per cent, since the interest cost is \$12 on a loan whose average amount outstanding is only slightly more than \$100. This 12 per cent loan, costing \$12, is actually not a bad arrangement as instalment plans go. It is, for example, better than borrowing from those stores which adhere to the old custom of adding 10

per cent to the cash price of an article bought on credit, and then making easy payment terms "at no further charge to you." That would mean \$30 added to the cost of the \$300 refrigerator, which makes the instalment contract cost \$30, instead of \$12. In general, it's a good idea to stay away from these old-fashioned credit terms.

Even in states with the most comprehensive instalment-buying safeguards there is no safety for the borrower who signs a deferred-payment contract first and reads it later. A New York state legislative investigation into sharp bargains driven by automobile dealers turned up interest rates running to 291 per cent a year. (These were hidden in contracts which appeared to be charging 37.4 per cent.) In some cases, it was revealed, these terms were set up and pressed on buyers who had been ready to pay cash for their cars; who, in fact, ran into trouble later when they tried to prepay their loans.

The instalment situation, in fine, has begun to smell so bad that many bankers have felt themselves obliged to point out that figures can lie; and that whereas the "retail instalment seller was once in dire need of protection, today he is quite adequately protected by law and it is rather the buyer who often needs protection." The American Bankers Association organ, the sober and conservative monthly, *Banking*, gives this example of a man in "low finance."

"He wants a car," the magazine article begins, "but lacks cash. A

helpful dealer tells him, 'It's O.K. to owe Shea. You can pay Shea on pay day,' and gives him a car in return for a small down payment and the balance 'in convenient instalments.' "

The buyer signs the contract:

The payments arranged are much higher than Jones [the buyer] expected, and almost beyond his means. . . . The charge is high because the dealer has packed it beyond reason for his benefits, and because it also reflects the cost of bonuses and rebates of the financing charges which a financing company will pay him for assigning the contract. (In other words, for getting his loan business.)

There are other charges, for recording the contract, insuring the car, and so on. The fees are higher than actual cost.

Jones is strapped but meets his payments until he receives, at a shorter interval than usual, a bill higher than usual. This causes him to default. When he does pay he finds that he contracted stiff delinquency and collection charges and an "attorney's fee," although no attorney ever entered into the picture. Then, after most of the price of the car is paid, he is told that he is a poor credit risk, and that the remaining balance is therefore declared due. He defaults again. The car is repossessed (at expense to Jones) and sold at a bargain price which still leaves an unpaid balance.

This, however, will be taken care of with no further trouble to Jones since it will be paid out of an assignment of wages which he agreed to, unknowingly, in the first place.

This is an old, old story. Not until 1935 did anybody try to do anything about it. Indiana, Wisconsin and Utah finally passed legislation protecting the instalment buyer. During the war, the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief

Act gave protection to the bulk of those who were forced to buy on a time-payment basis, and since then more states have put laws on their books. Today about half of the 48 make some pretense of safeguarding buyers.

But until this protection is more thorough and widespread than it is today the instalment buyer would do well to look out for himself. Except in rare instances, the buyer can save a substantial part of these instalment credit costs by doing his own financing, *i.e.*, by borrowing money at a bank and paying cash for his purchase. This is especially true in the purchase of automobiles and other expensive items where the deferred payment plan often includes increases in rates of as much as 40 per cent, theoretically as a "reserve" for cars or other high-priced equipment which may have to be reclaimed, but actually as a kickback by the finance company to the dealer. In the dear, departed pre-World War II days, when cars had to be sold and buyers had to be "sweetened up" with too-optimistic trade-in values for their old cars, this kickback added to the instalment bill was often the dealer's principal source of profit.

People have borrowed since before Biblical times, and they will undoubtedly continue to do so. Borrowing does not have to be the social evil that it often is. But until the small borrower learns to check on his rights, and to "shop around" before making a loan, it will continue to be a major source of injustice.

THE DAMAGED ONES

A STORY

BY HARRIET RENAUD

ALL evening Saxe had been waiting for this particular point in the party. It was the point that was reached just before a party broke. If you saw a party as a large bubble, then you got so you could recognize the exact moment when it stopped floating and all the people in it were, for an instant, perfectly suspended. Then the bubble broke, and even if you stayed on, you knew the party was really over, and the people were divided into three groups — those who sat because they couldn't move, those who got home (their own or someone else's), and those who got as far as the bedroom and fell asleep on your coat on the bed.

It was really because of this last group that Saxe had stayed drunk enough to see the bubble, and sober enough to be conscious of it at the crucial moment. He had decided, in the middle of what had been a particularly bad week, that it would be a very important omen of some kind if he and Kitty went home together from the next party they went to. And now he had it figured, craftily, that if he

knew just when to make a dash for the bedroom, he could get his and Kitty's coats without any trouble whatsoever, and be that much ahead.

He had the small worried hope too that once the party started breaking, Kitty would be able to hear him again when he spoke to her. It had been several hours now since he had been able to make any sound that she would respond to. He hadn't had that trouble with anyone else; in fact, several people had told him with great affection to shut up. But although he had definitely seen Kitty's eyes focus on him at least twice, he had not been able to get her to make a sign that she heard anything at all of what he was saying to her.

He took a quick look at the bubble, just beginning to round into its final moment, tipped his glass back until it was empty, and made for the bedroom. There was no one there yet, and he got his and Kitty's coats, just as he'd planned, and went directly back to the spot where he had a feeling Kitty had been the last time he'd seen her. But she wasn't there.

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He stood still for a moment, in the middle of the bursting bubble, feeling very drunk and holding Kitty's coat by the fur collar in a way that would have made her very mad if she had seen it. And then he started walking about the room, very carefully and systematically looking into everyone's face to make sure it wasn't Kitty's.

When he got to Irene Levitt, she said, "What are you doing here, Saxe? Didn't Kitty tell you? Marcella phoned a while back and said your Janie was throwing up. Didn't —?"

Saxe said, "Thanks," and didn't wait for any more. It seemed to him as he ran out, with his and Kitty's coats, that this was probably the most poignant moment of his life. His fear about what might be wrong with Janie was tied in a knot with the tremendous tenderness that came over him whenever he thought of her, and now it was all ringed round with his relief about Kitty and his great pride in her.

"That was quite a motherly thing to do, wasn't it?" he said to himself, as though he were having an argument. "I mean, for someone who loves a party as much as Kitty, to get so upset about Janie's throwing up that she went home without even taking her coat?"

When he got outside, he realized it was very cold, and he hoped that Kitty hadn't caught cold on the way home, although it was only four blocks away. He ran practically all the way, and was very glad in a way that

it was so late when she left the party, because the later it was, the fewer drunks there were on the streets.

II

Kitty had moved into their current apartment, near Washington Square, while he was overseas during the war, and Saxe still felt strange in it. It was upstairs over a bar and grill, flanked on one side by a very swank lobster place that had a real wheel and anchor in the window, and on the other by a liquor store. Saxe went up the stairs two at a time. The door of his apartment was wide open, just as he knew the Levitts' door, directly above, was too. Whenever they all went to a party, Marcella sat with Janie and listened for the Levitts' children. Ordinarily, Marcella came about noon, to take Janie home from school, and then stayed with her until six, when Kitty got home from the job she had taken during the war and still kept. When he was out of town, which was often, and Kitty didn't get home, Marcella knew to leave Janie with the Levitts.

Now Marcella was sitting in the living room, her hands folded in her lap, her coat thrown over her, and her eyes closed. Looking at her while she stirred and opened her eyes, Saxe knew that things were the way he had been afraid they were all evening, especially since he'd found out Kitty had left the party.

"I'm sorry, Marcella," he said. "Sorry about being late and all the mess." He didn't feel the least bit

tight any more, so that now he really knew how things were, but he said it anyhow. "Where's Mrs. Lawson, Marcella?"

"I dunno," Marcella said, tonelessly, getting up and putting on her shabby old coat over her large, spare, shabby body. "I guess I dunno nothin' about nothin' no more." Saxe watched her button all the buttons of her coat with her great brown fingers.

"Listen," he said, "wait a minute, Marcella. Don't go yet." He went into Janie's room. It was all cleaned up, but everything smelled of her throwing up. Janie herself was very clean in her sleep, her face shining either from hot water and soap or tears, and her hair like limp, damp ropes on the pillow.

Saxe went back into the living room. Marcella was sitting down again, still wearing her coat. "I want you to know how much we appreciate this, Marcella," he said. "I know we broke our promise about getting home by one. I drank too much and lost track of the time. I'm awfully sorry. I'll call a cab, Marcella, and I sincerely hope you will forgive us."

"It ain' jus' me," Marcella said. "It ain' jus' me you broke your promise to. Jus' remember that. I tole 'er, I tole Miz Lawson. I said, 'Aw right, this once I'll try again. But I'm warnin' you, my patience is givin' out for good.' And she promised. She promised me and then she wen' in and she promised — her." Marcella's large, loose mouth moved strangely,

and she put a hand over her tired black eyes.

"So then Janie woke up about ten," Marcella said, "an' she said, 'What time is it, Marcella?' she said, an' I tole 'er, an' she smiled jus' as sweet, and wen' right back to sleep. An' then she woke up again, and that time I couldn' tell 'er what time it was. But she's been learnin' it herself. She ain' learnin' to read, but she taught herself to tell time, an' she said, 'I can tell by my radjium clock, it's twen'y minutes after two o'clock.' An' then she started throwin' up.

"So then I called the number you lef', on'y I couldn' get Miz Lawson, but Miz Levitt said she would tell her. An' that was an hour an' a haf ago."

"I'm sorry," Saxe said. It was a foolish thing to say, when you knew you were so sorry about so many things there weren't any words to express it. "I'm sorry," he said again. "If I get you a cab, Marcella, you'll still be able to get some sleep and come back tomorrow, won't you?"

"I tole 'er," Marcella said. "Even when I first came and Miz Lawson took that job, never comin' home, I tole 'er. I said, 'Enuff's enuff.' But nothin' did no good, and I thought to mysel', I thought, 'When the war's over, the craziness'll go out o' people. Won' have no excuse to be crazy, the craziness'll go out o' them.' I even tole 'er, little mite that she was, couldn' walk yet, I even tole Janie, I said, 'You jus' wait 'till the war's over, and your daddy comes home. Every-

thing'll be better then.' Well, it's over. An' her daddy's home and he's not home. An' people what are crazy are gonna be crazy, war or no war. An' nothin' ain' changed. Nothin'."

"I'm sorry," Saxe said. "It's my fault. I just didn't really see how things were." But it was a lie. He'd seen how things were, all right.

"I don' care whose fault it is," Marcella said. She leaned back again, still wearing her crazy, patched brown coat, and closed her eyes. Her lids twitched nervously, and Saxe went over and put a hand on her shoulder.

"I'll go call a cab, Marcella," Saxe said.

"Lissen," Marcella said, fiercely. "I can' make it, you hear? No matter what no one says, I can' make it. I tried to figger it out, I swear I tried to figger it out. But it wouldn' work out nohow. I'd haf to get up haf-pas'-six to get here in time to fix that cereal. I didn' tell Janie I was gonna try. But I was figgerin'. And now I can' make it nohow."

"I'll go call you a cab," Saxe said, "and then will you tell me about the cereal, Marcella?" He called cab companies until he found one that said a cabby would pick up Marcella on his way home.

When he got back to Marcella, he saw that she was crying. Her tears looked old and yellow on her cheeks, as though she'd had them a long time before she shed them.

He knew it would be much better if he didn't ask her what he was

going to ask. "What about the cereal, Marcella?" he asked.

"It on'y jus' happened today," Marcella said. "She cried all the way home from school and wouldn' eat no lunch. Then she tole me. She said the teacher tole the whole class there was a new club bein' formed, and they could all belong on one condition. So then she ast all the children who ate hot cooked cereal for breakfast ev'y day to raise their hands. And Janie was the on'y one didn' raise her hand. She didn' know she was the on'y one 'till the teacher picked 'er out and ast 'er how come. Janie tole 'er it was because her mama didn' let 'er cook yet."

Saxe kept his eyes on Marcella very carefully. It was the only way he could think of right now to punish himself. "What did the teacher say?" he asked. "Did Janie say what the teacher said?"

"The class laughed," Marcella said, wearily. "She said the class laughed and the teacher wrote Miz Lawson a note."

There was absolutely no point in asking about Kitty and the note, and this time he didn't ask it. He and Marcella sat in the living room for quite a while without saying anything, and then Saxe got up and looked out of the window, and saw the cab's lights down the street. He walked downstairs with Marcella and put a five-dollar bill in her hand.

"It's for the cab," he said, quickly, to make sure she wouldn't make a mistake and think he was trying to

pay her for any of the things she did.

She nodded and got into the cab. "Will you — will you get here tomorrow, Marcella?" he said. "I mean, the regular time?"

"Reg'lar time," Marcella said. And Saxe went back upstairs.

III

He got undressed and then went in and looked at Janie again. There were two little frown marks between her eyes, as though she were concentrating very hard on being asleep. He went back into his and Kitty's room and got into his side of the bed. It was five o'clock, and he was glad the blinds were drawn so that he couldn't see the dawn come in. It was a fairly lonely feeling, seeing the dawn come in, and although this was pretty much the way things had been ever since he had come home from overseas, it wasn't something he felt himself getting used to.

After he got back to the States and saw what had been happening to Kitty, he blamed himself for having agreed to her taking a job. He told himself that after all, Kitty was a small town girl, and the people around a big advertising agency could be rather heady medicine for a pretty wife whose husband was away. But Kitty refused to give up her job when he got home. She said she wanted a lot of things his salary couldn't give her.

So after a while, when he had the chance to go on a series of junkets for his paper, he took it, although he

didn't feel very comfortable about his ability to make good. He had never thought of himself as a particularly hot reporter, but he knew that he had a good, even, slightly back-handed style that seemed to work all right on the stories he usually did.

Kitty had been terribly excited about what she'd called his moving into the big time at last, but Saxe had accepted the assignment primarily because he thought that with the increase in salary, plus bonuses and his expense account, there would be enough money for Kitty to stop working. When he got back from his first trip, an extended jaunt to the South Pole with a naval task force, he pointed out to Kitty that his income was slightly larger now than their combined incomes had been with his old salary. Kitty had moved up in her job, and she was now secretary to one of the organization's big wheels. She said that money wasn't everything, and that her working was a way of expressing her own personality.

Saxe hadn't seen much point in going on any more of the trips, even though, much to his surprise, it was the general impression that he had done a very good job. When he told Kitty he was going to ask for a home-office assignment again, she said a good many things, among which were: that he was just a small-town joe without any ambition, that it always gave her a big bang to see his by-lines, and that a man owed it to his family to earn as much money as it was possible for him to earn.

He hadn't quit at that point, but he still felt that that was a temporary decision, and that the problem of his going on with this particular job would dissolve when he had worked things out better between Kitty and himself. He had been home with Kitty and Janie about ten months, all told, in the past two years.

He missed them both very much whenever he was away, but actually, even when he was home, he didn't see very much of Janie. This was partly because he worked on an afternoon paper, and didn't have to be at the office until eleven, and partly because he was trying to live his life with Kitty as much as possible, and Janie didn't fit into her schedule.

Janie had started to Kindergarten about a year ago, while he was away covering some atom bomb tests, and after he had been home for a while, he'd asked Kitty how Janie got her breakfasts.

Kitty had showed him then how everything was set out so that Janie could reach it herself—the milk bottle on the lower shelf of the refrigerator, the corn flakes and bowl on the table with a piece of fruit.

"Then she goes down to the corner," Kitty said, "and the mother whose turn it is to take the neighborhood kids to school that day, picks her up too. I get out of it on account of being a 'working mother.' The whole thing works like a charm."

Saxe had thought all this was very precocious of Janie and he said he was very proud of her. But he had won-

dered if it wasn't pretty lonely for the little thing to get up by herself every morning.

"Listen, Saxe," Kitty said, "I got up plenty when Janie was smaller. But she's a pretty big girl now, and she has to be at school at eight in the morning. *Eight*. I don't have to be at the office until ten, or some days, eleven. What would be the point in killing myself to get up at seven, when Janie can do it herself? Besides, it's never too early for her to learn that this is a tough world where people have to get along by themselves. I don't want her to be dependent on me or anyone else."

There were a number of things Saxe had thought of to say at that point, but nothing that Kitty would have listened to, or that would have made any difference. He had gone away again shortly after that, and he'd sent Janie a lot of presents. But doing this had only seemed to add to his load of guilt, so after a while he'd stopped.

IV

Saxe usually tried to lie awake and wait for Kitty to come in, but this time he couldn't tell whether he had been sleeping or not when Kitty came home. It was a quarter to six in the morning, he saw by his watch, but it was still dark in the room because of the drawn blinds. Kitty came in and threw herself on the bed and said, as she always did, that she was very cold. This one morning Saxe did not get up and make her coffee, but he

undressed and covered her and took her in his arms. Her dress was torn and her bright hair was very dirty, especially on one side. He couldn't tell whether she had caught cold or not, although she had been out all night without her coat.

She had got used to his accepting everything she told him, so she confessed everything she could think of. She said she remembered part of the evening, when she thought she'd seen part of a midnight baseball game with a bartender, but she wasn't clear about the rest of the time. She said that Saxe was too good for her, that she often thought of committing suicide, and that her feet were cold. She was worried about having fallen down in the street on her way home, because she had heard a drunk laugh at her.

Saxe told her that he loved her, that he was by no means too good for her, and that they would work something out. After a while, she gave him her long, sweet smile, and fell asleep with her head on his shoulder. The smell of liquor was very strong around her, but after a while he got used to it and didn't seem to smell it any more.

He lay awake for a long time and thought he was a fairly weak fellow not to be able to carry his guilt and Kitty's any better than he was doing. He knew that one night pretty soon now Kitty would come home and announce that she was going to commit suicide, and he wouldn't believe her. Then she would go into the bathroom and take ten or twelve veronal

pills, anyhow some number that would be enough to make a large mess. They would pump her out and then for three days and nights she would lie in bed in a kind of coma and say her hands and feet were cold. She would be a very good girl for those three days, and when she first opened her eyes, they would be clear and sweet, and she would recognize him. But then she would get up, and it would start in all over again. And when it did, he wasn't at all sure that he would have it in him to go on carrying the load again.

At a quarter after seven, he heard Janie's little alarm clock go off, and he heard her get dressed and brush her teeth and go into the kitchen. He did not get up to cook her cereal, and he hoped that when he was frying in hell, which he would surely do anyhow, they would extend his sentence for not having gotten up this morning to fix Janie her hot cereal.

But it wasn't as though he had any choices. He was absolutely certain that the whole answer to everything lay in their staying together — Kitty and Janie and himself. No damage that any of them might suffer could be worse than what would happen if this pattern were shattered. The shattering of the pattern that held them was the one thing, of course, that it was not possible to contemplate.

So it was not for him to come between Kitty and Janie. Janie was going to have Kitty for her mother all the rest of her life, and she would

have to grow up learning how to be Kitty's daughter. He could only hope that the damage would not go too deep.

This was not a very easy view to take at this time, but there wasn't any use in believing in anything if it turned out that there was no way for him and Kitty and Janie to live to-

gether decently. If he just stayed with it, and somehow managed to go on carrying the load, it would all work out. It wasn't possible that there was no way in the whole world for him and Kitty and Janie to live together decently. It was the only thing in the world he was really sure of, but he was absolutely certain of that.

CRADLE SONG

BY CHARLES ANGOFF

You are the stillness
And blessed tumult,
Every soft goodness
Of my sweetest dream.
Sleep, my darling,
Sleep and sleep.

You are all summer,
Spring, fall, and winter,
Before and after,
Here and far beyond.
Sleep, my darling,
Sleep and sleep.

You give sanctity
To earth's whole being,
And warm unity
To the world and me.
Sleep, my darling,
Sleep and sleep.

HUEY LONG'S LOUISIANA HAYRIDE

BY HODDING CARTER

FOR newspapermen, those were gargantuan, memorable days. You stood beside his hotel dining table, as he slopped up great tablespoonsful of cereal with a sidwinding sweep or tore broiled chicken to pieces with his fingers, and you jotted down the incessant harangues against the lying newspapers, the city machine and the battered enemy politicians, while the bodyguards glowered protectively nearby. You didn't like him if only because the slugging of newspapermen didn't seem justifiable even for vote-getting, and especially when the strong-arming became personal. You were chased by militiamen across the parade grounds of Jackson Barracks in New Orleans and held a prisoner after you had sneaked in to discover whether the governor was calling out the troops on the eve of the Senatorial election — in which the governor was a candidate.

In a corridor of the garish Roosevelt Hotel, managed by an oily former shoe clerk who was now his paymaster and treasurer, you watched a fellow-reporter being hustled out of the gov-

ernor's suite. Inside the suite the reporter had struck the governor in retaliation for being cursed, and the governor had struck back, but only after his bodyguards had pinioned his attacker.

You interviewed him after he had precipitated a silly international incident by receiving a German admiral in disheveled green pajamas, and you laughed in spite of yourself at his shrewdly appealing account of his gaucherie. You heard a pale-faced man, thrust before a microphone, identify himself as Sam Irby, who had been kidnapped by state police on the eve of an election because he had threatened to tell what he knew about his daughter and the governor, who employed her as his secretary. And after Irby had told who he was, in front of the microphone in the hotel headquarters, you marveled at his exoneration of the governor, and speculated upon the reasons therefor.

Afterwards, in the corridor, a fellow-reporter was to have a gun thrust into his stomach as he sought to enter

HODDING CARTER won a Pulitzer Prize in 1946 for the vigorous campaign against race prejudice conducted by the Greenville, Mississippi, Delta Democrat-Times, of which he is editor. He contributed "The Mote and Beam of Bigotry" to the March 1947 *MERCURY*.

the elevator on which the mysterious Mr. Irby was being whisked away.

By the spring of 1935, Senator Huey Long owned Louisiana. And in that spring another and lesser man, except for his honesty, gave a fey, lonely warning.

His name was Mason Spencer. Young, big-boned, unafraid, he was relatively unimportant, almost the last member of the state legislature not to acquiesce in profitably, or accept silently, the final substitution of government by personal dictatorship for government by ballot. The Louisiana legislature had granted Senator Long, through his administrative and judicial proxies, incontestable control of all elections, including the appointment of commissioners, the power to disqualify unfriendly voters and the privilege of padding the voting lists wherever and whenever necessary. Already he possessed the courts, the municipal police forces, the school teachers, the taxing authorities, the governor, the state government, even the banks. Finally, he had the vote itself.

And Mason Spencer, an unimportant, honest man, rose in the legislature and said this:

When this ugly thing is boiled down in its own juices, it disenfranchises the white people of Louisiana. I am not gifted with second sight. Nor did I see a spot of blood on the moon last night. But I can see blood on the polished floor of this Capitol. For if you ride this thing through, you will travel with the white horse of death. White men have ever made poor slaves.

Representative Spencer was a better prophet than historian. In September of that year, the Capitol's marble floors were soiled with blood: Huey Long's blood, and the blood of the quiet, studious young doctor who shot him.

But the prophet of tragedy had overlooked the history of his state. Most Louisianians, for two hundred years, had been docile political slaves. Few knew enough about their state to recognize this almost uninterrupted and hitherto gently managed servitude. Nor was it something which those who did know wanted to be bruited about.

This historical truth must first be comprehended if the success of fascism in one American state is to be understood. Its colonists were a sad conglomerate, successively the vassals of two decadent and dying monarchies: Canadian *coureurs de bois* and their Indian women; professional soldiers of short life expectancy; a few adventurous or disappointed members of the French aristocracy; and a pitiful succession of peasants and artisans, sewer-scourings and exiled whores, having in common only poverty, hopelessness and neglect.

Among such settlers there was little thought of self-government. They were monstrously exploited. From the first, government was directed by the entrenched few. Creole gentry and American merchant and planter perpetuated a basic agreement. Only gentlemen and politicians managed by gentlemen should direct the back-

woodsmen who spilled over into the new territory and the descendants of the French and Spanish riffraff.

So, almost uninterruptedly, Louisiana politics from the Purchase until the Civil War was a story of genteel corruption, of steady political degeneration, of venality, of a studied neglect of civic advancement. Reconstruction further debilitated self-government; and where Reconstruction ended, rule under the gold-directed manipulation of the Louisiana Lottery began. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Louisianians could count on the fingers of one hand those major public servants who in all Louisiana history had been honest and progressive, active in behalf of the small people, and given to implementing campaign promises with administrative performance.

The political leaders were, for the most part, conservative stereotypes; and even in New Orleans the machine politicians were guided in the things that mattered. They cooperated with the bankers, the large merchants, the oil and sugar and cotton interests, the affluent votaries of the status quo. A wise statesman didn't antagonize the railroads, the banks, the refiners, the lumbermen, the enterprising developers — or exploiters — of the great and noble state of Louisiana. He orated, with elocutionary fire, about the glories of the past and the wonders of the future, about the dark days of Reconstruction, about white supremacy and black threats, God's mercy and the rightness of the estab-

lished order. This is not to say that all were politically immoral or amoral, though most of them actually were. They resembled atavistic mastadons, towering above and unknowingly becoming trapped in a surging human slough. In this they were not unlike their fellow-politicians elsewhere. The difference was that for two hundred years Louisiana had been so very safe for the mastadons.

II

Such was the political Louisiana in which Huey Pierce Long was born in 1893, in impoverished Winn parish in north Louisiana, a breeding ground of economic and political dissenters. His background was tailor-made for a politician. A log cabin, albeit a substantial one, was his birthplace. His father was a farmer of small means but with considerable ambition, who managed to send six of his nine children — but not Huey — to college.

Young Huey hated both farm work and conformity. In high school he discovered his talent for spell-binding oratory, and the power of a vocabulary enriched by Biblical allusion and directness, acquired naturally in a devout Baptist home.

The years between his graduation and his becoming a member of the Louisiana bar at twenty-one tested to the limit his extraordinary physical energy and driving mental discipline — the only discipline which he ever perfected in himself. Marrying before he reached voting age, he supported himself and his wife by peddling Cot-

tolene, a cooking compound, throughout north Louisiana, meeting thereby and making friends of many farm folk who were to become the core of his political organization. He attended Oklahoma University Law School for one tempestuous term. Then, incredibly, he completed the three-year law course at Tulane University in eight months; and, securing a special examination from the Louisiana Supreme Court, became a lawyer at twenty-one. No other student at Tulane has ever matched this record.

He hung out his shingle in Winnfield, county seat of Winn parish. His first benefactor in Winnfield was a state senator named Harper, a prosperous man for the locality, but a "radical" who proposed a redistribution of national income as the cure-all for the country's ills. During the first World War, Harper published a pamphlet calling for conscription of the nation's wealth as well as its manpower. A Federal grand jury indicted him. He was defended by his young disciple, Huey, who was deferred in the draft because he had a wife and child. (Huey also tried to gain exemption as a public official. He was a notary public.) Through questionable strategy, Huey won Harper's acquittal.

At 24, Huey sought the one state office open to one of his age, a state railroad commissionership. The Railroad Commission was Louisiana's three-man utilities regulating body. He won. In the campaign he gained another ally, an older Winnfield man

named O.K. Allen, who lent him \$500 to help finance his campaign. Later, when Long was elected United States Senator, he rewarded O.K. by making him his governor, stooge and errand boy.

As railroad commissioner, Huey was something uncomfortably new and strange. Some regarded him as a radical menace, others saw only a coarse publicity-seeking clown, a thick, comical-looking youngster with a face that was a puffy caricature of a cherub, with its dimpled chin, snub nose and unruly, curling reddish hair. But among the masses there were multiplying thousands who saw a champion, a new Great Commoner, who damned and insulted Bigness in all its Louisiana manifestations.

In 1920 he supported for governor John M. Parker, one-time Bull Moose Vice-Presidential running mate of Theodore Roosevelt, because he believed the comparatively liberal Parker would deal strongly with Standard Oil. But Parker, to Huey's thinking, was too lenient after he became governor. Huey broke with him, was indicted and convicted of libeling the governor, and was fined a dollar and given a 30-day suspended sentence. He refused to pay the fine, so the judge and opposing counsel made up the dollar themselves.

But he was winning friends and influencing voters. In 1924, at the height of the bitter Klan fight in Louisiana, Huey Long, now 30, announced for governor. He tried to go down the middle on the Klan issue. He almost

succeeded. Before election day he predicted that he would win if rain didn't keep the mud-farmers away from the polls. It rained, and he lost. But already the uneasy feeling had arisen among his opponents that he would be unbeatable the next time.

III

From 1925 to 1928 Huey mended political fences, kept himself in the headlines, and built up a large and lucrative practice as attorney for some of the vested interests against which he ranted.

The 1928 campaign was more like a cyclonic disturbance than another three-way race for the governorship. Huey was probably the most indefatigable campaigner and best catch-as-catch-can stumper the demagogically fertile South has yet produced. He belabored and promised and defamed, speaking in the harsh, bitter language of the poor man, eighteen and twenty hours a day. Beneath the erroneously named Evangeline oak, he drove his program home to open-mouthed, whooping Cajuns:

And it is here that Evangeline waited for her lover Gabriel who never came. This oak is an immortal spot, made so by Longfellow's poem. But Evangeline is not the only one who has waited here in disappointment. Where are the schools you have waited for for your children, that have never come? Where are the roads and the highways that you spent your money to build, that are no nearer now than ever before? Where are the institutions to care for the sick and disabled? Evangeline wept bitter tears in her disappointment. But they lasted through only one lifetime.

Your tears in this country, around this oak, have lasted for generations. Give me the chance to dry the tears of those who still weep here.

No rain fell on election day this time. The evil city again rejected him, but Catholic and Protestant farmers united to give him a lead, though not a clear majority. His two opponents wouldn't join forces; and at 35 Huey Long sat in the governor's chair that he was to transform into a throne. Louisiana's poor whites had come into their own.

Long summarily discharged every state job-holder under executive control who had not actively supported him. Lacking a majority at the first session of the legislature, he swapped patronage for concessions, and in both House and Senate placed his own men in the chair. The legislature approved his proposal for a \$30 million bond issue to provide farm roads, increased hospital and other institutional support, and free school books, levying a severance tax and higher gasoline taxes to pay for the program. Behind Huey were the people, and the people wanted these things.

And with the people behind him, Huey expanded ominously. Defying rule and convention, he personally directed strategy from the floors of the House and Senate. Once he bragged that he was the state constitution now, and again that he had bought a legislator like a sack of potatoes. He coerced banks which hesitated to make the state a tide-over loan. The legality of his free textbook

law challenged because it included parochial schools among the recipients, he argued his own case before the United States Supreme Court and won brilliantly. Without constitutional authority, he ordered the state militia into the unfriendly, wide-open parishes adjoining New Orleans, and closed the casinos until the gamblers cooperated.

All this was shocking enough to those Louisianians who favorably recalled less troublesome days and ways. But when Huey summoned the legislature into special session to enact a five-cent occupational tax on oil to aid "the sick, the halt, the blind and the children," all Hell broke loose. A barrel-house free-for-all took place on the floor of the House when Long's speaker, smelling impeachment in the air, declared the House adjourned *sine die*. Bloody-faced legislators groped blindly for assailants who had struck them from behind. Men were felled by inkwells, canes, bare fists.

The next day the speaker decided that the House had not adjourned, and the House proceeded to impeach Huey Long. The charges ranged from the grave to the ridiculous. Huey had sought to bribe legislators. He had plotted the murder of an opposition senator. He had misused, misapplied and misappropriated state funds. He had squandered monies allocated to a national governors' conference in New Orleans on a riotous, bosomy party, testimony concerning which left some governors red-faced. He had acted unbecomingly in public places,

even to the extent of getting cock-eyed drunk.

Huey fought back with promises, intimidation and circulars, distributed by the hundreds of thousands by state employees to the faithful. Again he barnstormed Louisiana. His primary targets, not altogether without justification, were Standard Oil, the newspapers — particularly the New Orleans newspapers — and the old political guard.

To most of the state it looked as if Huey were finished. Then, dramatically, he produced a round robin, signed by fifteen senators, who declared that no matter what evidence was submitted to the Senate they would not vote to convict the governor because they believed the charges against him were invalid. The number was one more than enough to prevent a two-thirds majority necessary for conviction. The deserving fifteen reaped earthly rewards, and never again was Huey in dire political danger.

From this fiasco emerged the dictator, vindictive and intent upon a domination that could not again be challenged.

IV

Louisiana's frightened, vengeful governor surrounded himself with a half-dozen gun-ready, slugging bodyguards. He established a weekly newspaper, the *Louisiana Progress*, staffed it principally with skillful, conscienceless young newspapermen, and sicked it on his enemies. State employees

found it good insurance to subscribe to the *Progress*, the number of subscriptions depending upon the size of their salaries, but with a minimum of ten to be sold, eaten or used as wallpaper. No opponent big enough to be worthy of notice escaped its libeling. The voters of the nation's most illiterate state could understand its cartoon obscenities even when they couldn't spell out the text.

The public works program went into high gear. The depression was rocking Louisiana. Public works meant needed jobs. And the administration could count on at least five votes for each employee. The first program was followed by a second and more ambitious one: a \$68 million highway construction project, a \$5 million skyscraper capitol, and another \$20 million in assorted projects, all to be financed by an additional three-cent hike in the gasoline tax. With a year and a half yet to serve as governor, and with the opposition organizing against the program, Huey decided to run for the United States Senate with the state program as his platform.

The use of the sound truck and the financial strangulation of the enemy city of New Orleans were the principal innovations of the campaign. Conservative, goateed, 70-year-old Joseph Ransdall, the incumbent whom Huey dubbed "Feather Duster," bumbled unavailingly. Huey won hands down. He designated his old benefactor, O.K. Allen of Winnfield, as governor for the next full term.

Meanwhile he concocted what might have been a good if desperate expedient for the cotton South. With Biblical precedent to back him up, he proposed that in protest against ruinous five-cent cotton, the South should let its cotton fields lie fallow for a year. But Huey managed to irritate Texas, the South's principal cotton producer, and the Texas legislature, thumbing its nose at "the arrogant jackass who brays from Louisiana . . . ignoramus, buffoon, meddler and liar," would have none of the plan. So it died.

In January, 1932, the Kingfish from Louisiana breezed into Washington. For the next three and one half years he performed simultaneously in two rings of a dazzling political circus, the capital of Louisiana and the capital of the nation. He soon broke with President Roosevelt, each sensing in the other a challenge, and from the Senate floor ridiculed "Prince Franklin, Knight of the Nourmahal," and his New Deal, unconcernedly violating the Senate's rules of personal decorum by lampooning administration stalwarts. Day after day Huey made news. Sometimes amusing news, as in the controversy over whether cornbread should be dunked or crumbled in turnip greens potlikker. Sometimes bad news for Huey, as when an unidentified guest at a Sands Point, Long Island, club resented with hammering fists the Kingfish's impatient attempt to make use of a urinal before the other had moved aside.

*In 1934, Long formalized the pro-

gram which he hoped would eventually win him the Presidency. The hazy concept of a national redistribution of wealth, presented fifteen years before by the obscure state senator from Winn Parish, took definable shape in a national "Share Our Wealth" organization. No dues were necessary. Huey produced the expense money as easily as the nation disgorged the followers, both by the hundreds of thousands. No matter that the Share Our Wealth program was demonstrably impracticable as presented. It *was* believable: A limitation of fortunes to \$5 million. An annual income minimum of \$2000. An annual income maximum of \$1,800,000. A homestead grant of \$6000 for every family. Free education from kindergarten through college. Bonuses for veterans. Old age pensions, radios, automobiles, an abundance of cheap food through governmental purchase and storage of surpluses. The Share Our Wealth members had their own catchy song, "Every Man a King," their own newspaper, the mud-slinging *Louisiana Progress*, expanded now to the *American Progress*.

The movement was nothing less than a new political party, heir to the yearnings and frustrations of the Populists, the Whisky Rebels, the Know-Nothings, the Free Silverites, of all the have-nots of capitalism. The New Deal became worried, and began to use its Louisiana patronage accordingly.

By legislative action, Long made sure that no Federal relief money

could be obtained by any Louisiana municipality or county except with the approval and supervision of an agency of his own. The Federal administration retaliated by withholding PWA project funds. Revenue agents roved through Louisiana from 1932 until well after Long's death, and eventually with decisive results. A Senatorial committee timorously held hearings in New Orleans relative to the corruption which accompanied the election to the Senate of a Long ally, John Overton; and, after being defied, browbeaten and ridiculed by Huey and his glibbing lieutenants, exonerated Overton.

As the Share Our Wealth chorus swelled, Huey, like a wise military tactician, took care to protect his rear. In a spectacular, degenerative series of special sessions in 1934 and 1935, his legislature reduced Louisianians almost literally to the status of Indian wards. Together with this final elimination of the actualities of democratic self-government — to the unconcern of a majority of the unconsulted electorate — came new benefits: homestead tax exemption, theoretically up to \$2000; abolition of the one-dollar poll tax; a debt moratorium act — and new taxes: an income tax; a public utilities receipts tax; an attempted "two cents a lie" tax on the advertising receipts of the larger newspapers, which the United States Supreme Court pronounced unconstitutional.

Huey's figurehead governor, O.K. Allen, was given the power to call out

the militia whenever he — or Huey — wished. The governor could — and did — expand the state police force into a swarm of private agents, some uniformed and some not, their number and the identity of the uniformed alike a secret. The State Attorney-General was empowered to supersede any district attorney in any trial. The State Tax Commission was given the right to change any city or county tax assessment, so that a misbehaving corporation or individual might know just who held the economic stranglehold. An ironically-designated civil service board was created, without appointive control over all fire and police chiefs; and a school budget committee with the right to review the appointments of every school teacher and school employee.

V

It is perhaps a corollary that in the last year of his life, Long became obsessed with a fear of assassination. He increased his armed bodyguard, and took other unusual precautions to insure his personal safety. In July 1935 he charged on the floor of the Senate that enemies had planned his death with "one man, one gun and one bullet" as the medium, and with the promise of a Presidential pardon as the slayer's reward. This plot, he said, was hatched in a New Orleans hotel at a gathering of his enemies. A dictograph, concealed in the meeting room, had recorded the "murderous conversation." I was at that meeting. It was a caucus of die-hard opposi-

tionists, dolefully trying to decide what to do for the next state campaign. And the "plotting" was limited to such hopefully expressed comments as "Good God, I wish somebody would kill the son of a bitch."

And somebody did. That July, the white horse of death, foreseen by Mason Spencer earlier in the year, was but two months distant. On the night of September 8, a slender, bespectacled man in a white suit stepped from behind a marble pillar in the capitol as Long, accompanied by his closest aides and bodyguard, hurried to the governor's office. Dr. Carl Austin Weiss, the man in the white suit, drew a small pistol and fired once. Seconds later, the assassin lay dead, his body and head riddled by 61 shots. Huey Long staggered away with one bullet wound, perhaps a second, in his stomach. Thirty hours later he died.

The principal legatees of the kingdom effected an uneasy peace among themselves, settling upon one Richard Leche, a fat, easy-going minor henchman who held a judgeship, as a compromise candidate for governor. They had a limitless war chest and the election machinery. The Share Our Wealth Clubs were out to avenge their martyr. The repeal of the poll tax had almost doubled the voting lists, and the overwhelming majority of the new voters were remembering the man who had given them this free privilege and their roads and school books and a circus besides.

We took up the fight against

Long's heirs. On our side we had only the Federal patronage. In a vote-getting sense, this consisted mainly of WPA work orders which were distributed by the thousands to the anti-Long organizations. They didn't help much. The poor jobless devils took the work orders readily enough, but they didn't vote WPA.

Few among us could have won even in an honestly conducted election. In the eyes of too many old and new voters, the hands of the opposition were stained with Huey's blood. And we had nothing to offer except the promise that self-government would be returned to a people apparently content without it. The campaign was macabre. The heirs of Long did almost everything in his memory except display his body on the platform. And by the thousands upon thousands the Louisiana electorate voted vengeance for their martyr against the mythical "bloody murderers" whose indictments and convictions were a Leche campaign pledge. We would have been defeated even in an honest election; yet it was a bitter thing to stand by helplessly while the pre-marking of ballots through the endless chain device insured machine majorities in most of the boxes where the issue might otherwise have been in doubt.

No wealth-sharing ideologist or political rough-and-tumbler, Leche ushered in an era of comparably good feeling and incomparably good pickings. His morals as flaccid as his body, he took things easy, and his fellow-

freebooters took almost everything easily. "When I took the Governor's oath I didn't take the vows of poverty," quipped fat Dick.

With an eye on Louisiana's electoral votes in the 1936 Democratic National convention, the more practical politicians of the New Deal made a special kind of deal with Louisiana. Income tax prosecutions were dropped. Dick visited Washington, called upon and was photographed with President Roosevelt and some of the lesser figures of the administration. He was visited in turn in Louisiana by the President and Attorney General Murphy.

And then in 1939 the haunted, graft-debased house of Long began to fall apart. President James Monroe Smith of Louisiana State University went to the penitentiary for stealing state bonds. Dick Leche went to Federal prison. So did Seymour Weiss, the treasurer, Abe Shushan, one of the earliest Louisianians to support Long and to profit from that support, and several others. One grafter killed himself.

Earl Long, the flamboyant, politically unsuccessful brother of the Kingfish, tried to carry the flickering torch. Running for a full term, he was opposed by James Noe, a wealthy oil man and ally of Huey, whom the gang had shunted aside and who made it pay for the snub; Sam Jones, a young, incorruptible attorney who had spent most of his mature years fighting Longism; and James H. Morrison, a brass-voiced newcomer

who in platform technique was another Long. Earl Long led in the first primary, with Sam Jones second, Noe third and Morrison a poor fourth. Noe's support in the second primary would determine the winner. He got even with Earl Long by supporting Sam Jones.

But even in 1944 the ghost of Huey Long was not laid. A Long man was almost elected governor. He was defeated, not by a forthright crusader against machine politics, but by a mild and pleasant composer and singer of hillbilly ballads, a former professor and public service commissioner, who campaigned with his band and said nothing against any opponent. Perhaps because they were tired of invective and hate, Louisianians elected Jimmie Davis governor. His administration was uneventful, untroubled by corruption and perhaps too colorless for a state accustomed to bread, thieves and circuses.

Then, forgetting the past, a majority of Louisianians delivered themselves willingly, early in 1948, to the Long dynasty again. In January, vengeful Earl Long, lacking his brother's distorted vision and ability but as dictator-minded, drove to the governorship over Sam Jones, who in 1940 had undertaken the thankless housecleaning. And in July, 29-year-old Russell Long, Huey's spit-and-image son, triumphed in a much closer race for the Senate seat left vacant by the death of his father's old henchman, John Overton.

Beside them in their campaigns

stalked the ghost of Huey Long, giving credence to their promises of help for the poor, identifying brother and son with the little people whose material needs he had filled, reminding the insecure, the class-conscious, the conscienceless and the ignorant of the continuing cleavage between the powerful and the small. Almost overnight, Louisiana became the most heavily taxed state, per capita, in the nation as Earl Long rammed through revenue measures to make good his promises of largesse. But that didn't bother the little people. Huey, too, had soaked the rich. Let his brother and his boy have a go at it. Long live the Longs and to hell with the high hats and the reformers!

No, the ghost is not yet laid, although Huey Long is dead these many long years. Nor will it be for many years to come. For this hideous thing that we remember as the roughshod reign of the Kingfish was not hideous in its beginnings. Whether or not Huey Long himself was ever sincere in his protestations for the poor and downtrodden is, basically, beside the point. For he led a social-economic revolution in Louisiana; and after his death the entire South was debated ground.

VI

It was not his political genius and ruthlessness alone that made him possible. There were two other facts equally as important.

The first fact was that, after two hundred years, the people of Louisi-

ana were ready and waiting for a Messiah who would translate their needs into accomplishments. Theirs was the ground-swell of the little people, a people undisturbed by his tactics as long as they got the roads, the free bridges, the hospitals, the free schoolbooks, the public works; as long as the men whom he pilloried and broke and banished were identified with the leaders of the past, bumbling representatives of an indifferent, negative ruling class. The little people shrugged at graft because of their certainty that there always had been graft of a kind. This time, whatever the politicians skimmed off the top, they were getting theirs too. And they were getting something else. Revenge. A fantastic vengeance upon the Sodom and Gomorrah that was called New Orleans. A squaring of accounts with the big shots, Standard Oil and the bankers, the big planters, the entrenched interests everywhere.

The second fact was the weird make-up of the forces actively opposed to Long. His disunited enemies had difficulty from beginning to end in maintaining an alliance that had its base in military necessity alone. We were strange bed-fellows. Cynical spoils politicians of the Old Regular ring in New Orleans. Ardent, idealistic New Dealers. Inept leaders of the country parishes, turned out in short grass. Non-political gentility awakened from their slumbers by rude knocking. The hitherto secure representatives of Big Business. Honestly disturbed, solid bourgeoisie. Our

combined cries for good government made a dissonant chorus. Huey bowled us over like tenpins.

Even had Huey Long relied only upon his mesmeric appeal to Louisiana's masses and his ability to make promised delivery of the material things those masses wanted, it is probable that he could have dominated his state as completely and for at least as long as he did. But his compelling lust for power as such — a primary animating force in his political life — and the intense vindictiveness which from the start characterized his public career lured him to a morally indefensible position.

When impeachment seemed a certainty in those early months as governor, he simply bought and paid for enough legislators "like sacks of potatoes" to prevent the majority vote necessary for conviction. From then on, Long bought those whom he needed and could buy, and crushed those who had no purchase price or whose price was too high.

Nor was the control of a governor, a majority of legislators, a court majority enough. Even private citizens made their living by his suffrance. Long could have taxed to extinction any business, large or small, and business knew it. Men could be — and were — arrested by unidentified men, the members of his secret police, held incommunicado, tried and found guilty on trumped-up charges. A majority of the State Supreme Court became unabashedly his. Through his state printing board he popped an

economic whip over the rural and small town press, lashing all but a few into sullen silence. A thug, making a premeditated skull-crushing attack upon a Long opponent, could draw from his pocket in court a pre-signed pardon from the figure-head governor.

In the end, these things indirectly destroyed Huey Long himself. There are many conflicting tales as to why and how he was killed. This much is a certainty. His assassination was not plotted. It is not probable that Dr. Weiss went to the capitol the night of September 8, 1935 deliberately to kill Long. But he must have intended to protest a grave injury, the double-barrelled kind of injury Long delighted in inflicting. Dr. Weiss' father-in-law, an implacable enemy of Long, had been gerrymandered out of his judgeship. Two of the judge's daughters had been dismissed from their teaching positions in further retaliation. And worse, Long had circulated noisome rumors about the family's ancestry.

Political punishment compounded with savage slander. An old, tested formula for reducing enemies to impotence. But this time the formula distilled a deadly reaction. Those who knew young Dr. Weiss best say that he could have sought Long only to protest verbally or with his fists this grave slander. They say that he could have drawn his gun only because the bodyguards threatened him. Few in Louisiana believe the full, true story has been told, for Long's henchmen

were the only spectators. Perhaps the single bullet, fired from Weiss' small pistol, fatally wounded Long. Perhaps there was a second wound, as many Louisianians believe, caused by a ricocheting bullet from a bodyguard's gun. One bullet, two bullets. It is unimportant now, unimportant even then. Out of the terror he created, out of the driving passion to destroy other men, out of the futility that warped the minds of the Louisianians who opposed him, Huey Long himself forged the weapon which felled him.

And it need not have been so. He might have served Louisiana and the South as had no other political leader. Before the numbed thousands of his followers, the worn and credulous who milled across the grounds of the capitol, Gerald L. K. Smith, the grasping opportunist who directed the Share Our Wealth clubs, spoke an epitaph deserving to have been said of a better man by a better man:

His body shall never rest as long as hungry bodies cry for food, as long as lean human frames stand naked, as long as homeless wretches haunt this land of plenty.

Close beside the bier crowded the thieves and sycophants of the inner circle. Beyond wept the poor.

Huey Long was no true revolutionary. Power for power's sake was his mastering god. No revolutionary but — the word is used not loosely but gingerly — a dictator. A dictator, *sui generis*, the first truly such out of the soil of America.

What YOU Can Do About Cancer

Great strides have been made in diagnosing and treating cancer. While it is still the second major cause of death in the United States, the mortality rates from some forms are declining.

Medical science is constantly at work increasing its knowledge of this disease. Better techniques for diagnosing cancer exist today than ever before. For example, a recent development has raised the percentage of correct early diagnosis of one type of cancer from 36 to 95 per cent.

Advances in hormone and chemical therapy have proved valuable in relieving pain and prolonging life. Improved methods of treating the disease have cured, in some instances, cases that formerly would have been considered hopeless.

Present knowledge can be fully utilized only as more people learn the warnings of the disease and come for examination without delay. Cancer must be discovered early and treatment promptly started to get the full benefit from medical science.



1. Early Recognition

It is wise for everyone, and especially those past 35, to keep alert for cancer's danger signals. The American Cancer Society believes that many thousands of lives could be saved every year if cancer's warnings were recognized early and treated immediately.



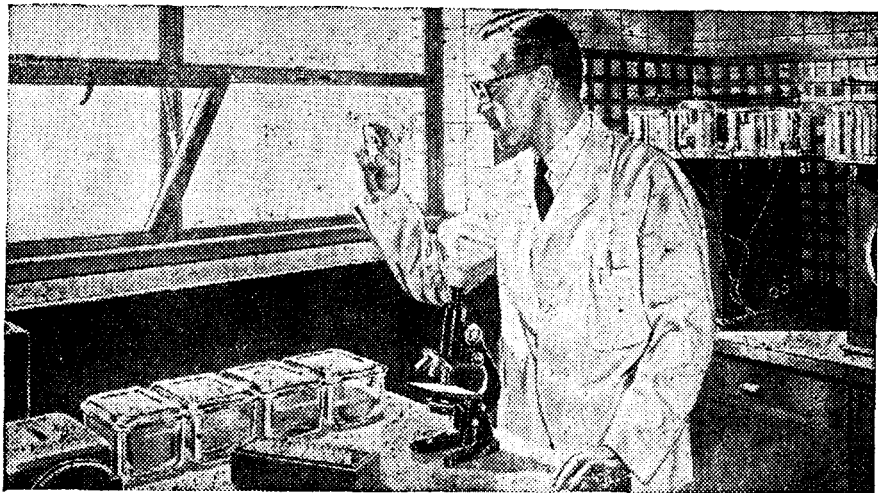
2. Prompt Attention

When any of these warnings appear, prompt medical attention is advisable. The doctor may suggest a more complete examination at a Cancer Clinic or by a specialist. It is encouraging to know that the majority of these examinations reveal that cancer is not present.

For further helpful information about cancer and to learn more about protecting yourself from this

disease, write for Metropolitan's free booklet, 49-L, "There Is Something YOU Can Do About Cancer."

TO VETERANS—IF YOU HAVE NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE—KEEP IT!



3. Proper Treatment

If cancer is discovered, the specialist will explain that the best treatment is surgery or radiation. He will point out that patent medicines for cancer and so-called "cancer cures" are often dangerous, and may give cancer time to spread.

These Are Cancer's "Danger Signals"

- Any lump or thickening especially in the breast, lip or tongue.
- Any irregular or unexplained bleeding.
- A sore that does not heal, particularly about the mouth, tongue, or lips.
- Noticeable changes in the color or size of a mole or wart.
- Loss of appetite or continued indigestion.
- Any persistent hoarseness, cough, or difficulty in swallowing.
- Any persistent change in normal elimination.

Pain is not usually an early symptom of cancer.

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OSCAR EWING MEETS THE PRESS

One of the central points in President Truman's Fair Deal is a national health insurance program. It has aroused violent discussion not only in the halls of Congress, but also in the medical profession and among the people at large. President Truman's chief exponent of the program is Oscar Ewing, head of the Federal Security Agency, and the man most likely to be the first Secretary of Public Welfare if the new Cabinet post is created. He recently expounded his views over Meet the Press, presented each Friday by the Mutual Broadcasting System in cooperation with the editors of THE AMERICAN MERCURY. His remarks, slightly cut, are printed here in the public interest.

THE participants in the broadcast, aside from Mr. Ewing, were Tom Reynolds of the Chicago *Sun-Times*, Cecil Dickson of the Gannett Newspapers, Ernest K. Lindley of *News-week*, and William H. Lawrence of the New York *Times*. Lawrence E. Spivak, editor of the *MERCURY*, presided.

SPIVAK: Welcome, everybody to another weekly news conference. Facing the press table is Oscar R. Ewing, who has been called a "never-say-die-and-proud-of-it" New Dealer. His law office is on Wall Street, but he is one of the top men in the Truman administration. He first came to Washington in 1940 as Assistant Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and was President Truman's Campaign Manager at the Democratic Convention. A lawyer of note, he won national attention

when he prosecuted William Dudley Pelley for sedition. In 1947, President Truman appointed him Federal Security Administrator, and in that position he has been a constant source of important news. His report to the President on the nation's health a few months ago started a debate that won't soon be ended. It came out for compulsory national health and disability insurance, a program that will cost close to \$7 billion a year. The President promised recently to push that program in the new Congress despite objections by organized medicine that it would socialize the medical profession, and by industry that it would impose a ruinous burden on our economy. And now, who has the first question? Mr. Reynolds?

REYNOLDS: Mr. Ewing, as Director of the Security Agency, I presume you will spearhead the fight for a

national health program in the coming Congress. I noticed in the last lobby registrations that the National Physicians' Committee which protests that it is not a lobbying group, registered expenditures of something over \$300,000. Generally speaking, this group has opposed the program that you now espouse. Can you tell me why it is that the physicians and organized medicine as such oppose your program?

EWING: Well, I suppose they simply don't know what it is we're proposing. The objections they make, most of them, simply don't apply to what we're talking about. They talk about being afraid it will destroy the relation between a doctor and his patient. Well, it just doesn't.

REYNOLDS: It seems incredible to me that the medical profession, which is rather well organized, doesn't know what it is opposing. Do you have any idea of how long this program has been mooted in the Congress now?

EWING: I don't know. Several years. Physicians get their information either from the National Physicians' Committee which is a subsidiary of the American Medical Association, or directly from the American Medical Association. I don't think either of them represents the plan correctly.

LAWRENCE: I was reading in the paper, Mr. Ewing, that the doctors have voted to levy each of their

members \$25 on, I think, a total membership of 140,000. It's for the purpose of educating their membership and, in general, to lobby and fight against this program. I wonder if you have any comment on that.

EWING: Well, I don't know whether all of those doctors will put up the \$25 or not. I don't know what they can use this money for properly. Of course, the National Physicians' Committee is the most expensive lobby in Washington today. They spent \$350,000 in the first nine months of this year, more than any other lobby spent. They spent more than the National Association of Real Estate Boards or the National Association of Electric Companies. The fact of the matter is that they ought to spend their money educating some of their own members, instead of trying to make the public feel that the present health of this country can't be improved. Because it can.

LAWRENCE: What's your reaction to the principle of an association, or what amounts to a trade union of doctors, levying a specific tax on all its members in order to fight this specific piece of legislation? We've been hearing a lot of talk about lobbying recently.

EWING: To me it's absurd that they've got to spend all that money lobbying. Suppose the labor unions, with 12 million members, were to assess their members \$25 apiece for lobbying. That'd raise a fund of

something like \$300 million. It's — to me, it's just not the thing to do. I mean, you don't have to do it if your cause is good.

SPIVAK: Well, there have been instances where labor unions have assessed their membership to help the New Deal win. There have been no objections raised to that, have there, Mr. Ewing?

EWING: They raised some large funds for election purposes, but that's —

SPIVAK: That was "to present information to the people." Mr. Lindley.

EWING: They're all called educational programs.

LINDLEY: It seems to me we're talking about rather small sums of money. Let's get back to the cost of the self-insurance program, if we may, Mr. Ewing. What is your best estimate of the total cost of that program when it's in full swing? And how much of the payroll tax would it take to support it, if it were supported entirely by payroll tax?

EWING: Well, Mr. Lindley, the first question as to how much it would cost is difficult to answer because it would depend on the extent of the services at the outset. We know that we haven't enough doctors or enough hospitals, enough medical personnel or physical equipment, to give complete medical services to all the people that would be entitled to have it. Probably at the outset we could only give general

practitioners' services to everyone who was entitled to it. As the services expanded, and as we got up to full coverage of home calls included in the doctors' services, with home nursing, the cost might run somewhere between \$4 billion and \$6 billion each year. If it ran to that amount, the cost on payroll deductions would be perhaps 4 per cent. Roughly estimating annual payrolls of \$150 million a year, 4 per cent would raise \$6 million: 2 per cent from the employers and 2 per cent from the employees.

LINDLEY: Mr. Ewing, you're also proposing to expand and increase the benefits under the Old Age and Survivors Insurance Plan and introduce permanent disability insurance, and, perhaps, to increase other benefits. Do you have an over-all figure on what it would cost — in terms of payroll tax — to support the complete program?

EWING: No, I don't. I haven't got that figure, Mr. Lindley.

SPIVAK: Haven't I seen some estimates that the complete cost would be pretty close to 20 per cent of our payroll?

EWING: You may have seen those estimates, but I don't think they're accurate.

SPIVAK: Are there any of your estimates around?

EWING: Yes, and I'm sorry I don't have them. But I don't think they run anywhere near that high, Mr. Spivak.

DICKSON: Mr. Ewing, your report in September said that this program would cost \$10 billion a year by 1960. Is that right?

EWING: Well, that report dealt with a great deal besides health insurance, Mr. Dickson. It involved medical education, aid to medical education, aid to research, medical research, hospitals, more hospitals, more diagnostic clinics, and all that. All of those things were included in the cost.

DICKSON: Mr. Ewing, is this patterned very much after the Communist system in Russia?

EWING: No, it has nothing —

DICKSON: They have district doctors and compulsory health services there, and the richest people in Russia are supposed to be doctors because the people don't go to the clinics, where they are supposed to go.

EWING: Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Dickson. This program is often called socialized medicine by its opponents. Now, of course, it gets down to a definition of what you mean by "socialized." I mean by socialized medicine a system where the doctors are in the employ of the State, where they are paid a salary, and the State can tell them what to do, and when to do it, and how to do it. Our plan doesn't envisage that at all. Our plan is very simple. In the first place, the administration of the plan would be, as far as possible, in local committees that would work in local health areas.

The doctors in an area would sit down with the local committee and agree on a scale of charges to be made for their services. Then, anyone who's entitled to their services would pick out the doctor that he wanted to serve him. I might say, "I'd like Dr. Jones." Dr. Jones'd say, "I don't want Ewing for a patient. I want somebody else — I won't take him." Well, I'd have to go hunt for somebody else. And when I do get a doctor that'll take me, there is absolutely no change from the existing situation, except that he's paid in accordance with those fees, and he gets his money out of the insurance fund instead of getting it directly from the patient.

DICKSON: Mr. Ewing, what do you think about not spending so much money on foreign aid and spending a little on American aid to health?

EWING: I don't think anyone in this country wants to spend any more on foreign aid than is necessary for the good of the United States of America. But we've got to spend whatever amount is required to do the job.

DICKSON: Do you think your plan will encourage youth to get into the medical profession?

EWING: Yes, I do, because I think there'll be a great many more financial inducements. If we get this plan into effect, there will be millions more paid for medical services each year, so that it'll support a great many more doctors and sup-

port them at a better scale than many of them live on today.

DICKSON: Do you know of any country that has more doctors in proportion to population than the United States?

EWING: I don't. I just don't know the answer one way or the other — whether there are or aren't. I can't tell you.

REYNOLDS: I'm particularly interested, Mr. Ewing, in the cost of this program. Let's translate it into terms that the average working man or woman can understand. Suppose I make \$50 a week, and suppose I'm spending a certain amount of money to support my wife and family and take care of them when they're ill. If I'm making that sum, how much can I anticipate, as a maximum, your program would take out of my pay check every week — fifty cents, a dollar, two dollars, or what?

EWING: Well, let's see. Fifty dollars a week — \$2600 a year — 2 per cent out of that. It'd be \$52. A dollar a week.

REYNOLDS: A dollar a week. That would be a maximum, now, wouldn't it? And my employer would have to give me — what?

EWING: He'd be contributing an equal amount.

REYNOLDS: An equal amount. And that, of course, would add on top of the other deductions which are already taken out of my \$50 a week for Social Security.

EWING: But you'd be getting an

awful lot back for it. You'd be getting medical service for your family for \$52 a year.

REYNOLDS: You said it would start slowly. Maybe the first year I wouldn't get as much as I would the second?

EWING: No, but there would be this: Until the services were more extensive, the tax would not be the full 4 per cent, half from the employer and half from the employee, that I've been talking about. We envisage a tuning-up period of three years to get the thing started.

REYNOLDS: But if I were making \$50 a week, the maximum that I could expect to be taken out of my pay check each week under your program would be one dollar?

EWING: That's right.

REYNOLDS: I have one more question. Suppose I were a Negro and I became seriously ill. Under your program, would I be able to get into a hospital that I usually find more or less closed to me now?

EWING: Definitely. At least it would certainly be our recommendation that the hospitals that come into this thing must treat patients without regard to race, creed or color.

REYNOLDS: Even in Birmingham or Atlanta or Charleston?

EWING: They've got to be provided for. The Negro's life is just as important to him as mine is to me.

REYNOLDS: How can you make that stick, though, Mr. Ewing?

EWING: I think we can.

SPIVAK: Mr. Ewing, I'd like to ask

you a practical question. Suppose most of the 180,000 doctors refuse to join your system — what then? What are you going to do about that?

EWING: You mean a doctor's strike, a refusal to do the thing? I just don't think that such a thing would happen.

SPIVAK: Suppose it did, though?

EWING: Well, that's an "if" question.

REYNOLDS: It happened in England. I understand that doctors were very reluctant there. Did they accidentally come around?

EWING: Oh, yes, yes. In England, the doctors did object to the plan but never to the idea of the pre-paid insurance plan. The objections there were to specific details of the plan. There were four specific objections. For a doctor to sell his practice was forbidden by law. Then the method of payment — the doctors objected to that. A third thing: under the English system the doctor was not allowed to settle in a community where there were too many doctors already, and they object to that. And there was a fourth objection. I can't remember what it was.

SPIVAK: Well, weren't the doctors finally forced to accept the plan?

EWING: Oh, no, no, no. They went in voluntarily, and 93 per cent of the doctors are in today. About a corresponding percentage of the population went in.

LINDLEY: Mr. Ewing, with respect to this 4 per cent payroll tax to sup-

port health insurance — does that pay the premium merely on insurance against the cost of medical care? What provision do you propose to make for loss of wages from disability, either temporary or permanent?

EWING: Well, that's a different kind of insurance, Mr. Lindley. That's a disability insurance.

LINDLEY: How much would that cost, do you think, in terms of the payroll tax?

EWING: I can't answer that.

LINDLEY: Suppose I have been paying steadily into your health insurance fund, and the thing we all dread occurs: a depression. I am out of work for two years. Am I still protected under that program?

EWING: Oh, sure.

LINDLEY: Well, how are you going to finance it then, if a very considerable portion of the population, say, 10 or 12 million people, are out of work? Won't your fund go bankrupt?

EWING: That's the whole idea: you would build up reserves in good times, hoping they would tide you over.

LINDLEY: Supposing we had a depression a year after you put the program into effect.

EWING: Well, we'd have to — I don't know how we'd meet that. We might have to use general tax funds to meet a situation of that kind.

LINDLEY: That would be direct appropriations. Physicians taking care of the public.

EWING: Yes, but I don't see how you could do it otherwise.

LAWRENCE: It seems to me we've had a lot of talk about the opposition to this program tonight, Mr. Ewing. I wonder if you interpret the election results in any way as bearing on this question of health insurance. It is certainly one of the things that the President talked about, and that Governor Dewey himself, in his Boston speech, said he favored.

EWING: Well, of course, everyone interprets the election as an endorsement of his own program. That may not be a fair thing to do, of course.

SPIVAK: Mr. Ewing, how are you going to get more doctors into the districts that need them most?

EWING: We're convinced that the reason — at least, one reason — that we have such a high concentration of doctors in urban areas is that they have the hospital facilities there that they need. And that's where the wealth is that attracts them from an economic point of view. Now, if this system goes into effect, we would eventually have those hospital facilities, those diagnostic facilities, available throughout the entire country, distributed as equally as possible. And the financial return should be such that there would not be much difference whether a man lived in the city or the country.

LINDLEY: Mr. Ewing, some of the questions tonight seem to imply that the only strong opposition to

health insurance comes from the medical profession. What about the great number of middle-income people who now manage to pay their doctors' bills and get good service? Won't they be adversely affected by this program?

EWING: The point of the thing is that today you have at least 70 million people in this country living in families where the total family income is less than \$3000 a year. Now, people living in those families — and that's half the population of America — can't pay for adequate medical services under the present system. And that's the group we want to reach.

LINDLEY: I understand that, and I sympathize with that objective. But can't it be reached without reducing the standard of medical care of the people who now get good care?

EWING: I do not think it will reduce their standard of medical care at all. I don't see why it should. Certainly, your doctors will be no less qualified. Your hospital facilities will be no worse.

SPIVAK: Mr. Ewing, in a speech you made in November, you said something that I'd like to ask you about. You said: "Even if we had to concede that every doctor in the country is unalterably opposed to the system, I should still like to ask this question. Which is more important? The personal, selfish business and professional values of some 180,000 practicing physicians

in this country, or the health and well-being of some 68 million of our population who cannot possibly afford to pay their fees?"

Now, what exactly do you mean by that? That if the doctors aren't willing to accept this system then something ought to be done to impose it on them?

EWING: No, no, no. I didn't mean that. So much of the public discussion on this thing is about the interests of the doctors, and of what's going to happen to the doctors. But what's happening to 70-odd million people all the time? I'd like to get a little thought diverted to that.

LAWRENCE: I don't think you quite got the point of my question about the election results, Mr. Ewing. That is this: In the past, we've had these programs and the Congress has done nothing about them. Now, do you feel a reasonable chance that this program will be enacted by the present Congress? And if so, with how much opposition?

EWING: Mr. Lawrence, this is a highly controversial subject, and whether it will get through this Congress or not I don't know. Certainly, we're a great deal further along since November second than we were on November first, and we have a great deal better likelihood

of getting the bill enacted. I hope we get it through this session, but whether that'll be the result I don't know.

DICKSON: Mr. Ewing, who's going to pay for the government's propaganda — lobbying for this bill?

EWING: Well, I don't get a dime for being here tonight. (LAUGHTER.)

REYNOLDS: Mr. Ewing, there was some talk during the campaign about a Cabinet status for your office. Do you expect to get Cabinet status during the coming four years?

EWING: The President has recommended that two or three times. Governor Dewey recommended it in his campaign. I think the Democrats might follow the President, and I would assume that all the Republicans in Congress will follow Mr. Dewey's leadership.

REYNOLDS: Would an elevation to the Cabinet help your programs?

EWING: I think that — very much so. The difference between the head of an agency and a member of the Cabinet is marked. You do have more power behind you. But for me, personally, it makes no difference. The only time I was fussy about the position I held was when I was a young man and was a notary public —

SPIVAK: I'm sorry to interrupt, but our time is up.

THE ENIGMA OF TOOTH DECAY

BY JAMES & PETA FULLER

DURING the century that dentistry has been a profession, and presumably a science, theories about tooth decay have changed as regularly as women's fashions. Each hypothesis in its heyday spawned a litter of nostrums supposed to reduce or eliminate caries (tooth decay). The list of these nostrums is long: vitamins, calcium, phosphorous, mineral balance, chewing gum, synthetic quinones, anti-biotics, ammonia, urea, mouth-washes, dentifrices, tooth-brushing and flossing, alkaline-ash diets, detergent diets, tough-to-chew foods, protein diets, and the emotionally stable life. Each of these has been sponsored at one time or another by advertisers or serious researchers, and flourished a while in the public prints. Most of them are now admitted by dental students to be largely ineffective.

Even dentists admit discouragement about the progress of caries research. "The results have been discordant, the conclusions contradictory and the outcome confusing," lamented the American Dental Associ-

ation's advisory committee on research. Although we know a lot about teeth, we don't know why they go bad.

Ten years ago fluorine was the villain in the story. It causes fluorosis (mottling of the tooth enamel), and people were warned against it. Despite this, fluorine became the great white hope of dentists recently. Under certain conditions it seems to work, though nobody understands why or how, and optimism about it became irrepressible. The dental clinic of the University of Chicago a short time ago offered the opinion that "ten cents per year per capita for the city's drinking-water supply may be the means for mass prevention of tooth decay." Painting sodium fluoride solutions on growing teeth cuts down dental decay in children by 40 per cent, it was said.

But now it has been established that fluorine offers no reasonable hope of any kind to any of us who are much over twelve years old. Even when applied by experts, as it must be, no one can be sure how long its effect

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will last. Experiments in fluoride wash treatments have been going on for only four or five years.

Neither is it known whether artificially fluorinated water is an adequate substitute for natural fluoride water. And even in the happy event that this supplement is effective, there will still be carious teeth in some sections of the population. For one third of the people in the United States do not use communal water supplies, and among those who do, some drink a lot and some almost none at all.

It has also been suggested that tablets of fluorine, like those sold at drug stores, might be the answer. The ADA's Council on Dental Therapeutics does not think so: "Though probably not dangerous in amounts recommended for daily consumption, fluorides added to diets already high in fluorine content, or consumed in areas where water supplies contain significant concentrations of fluorine, may constitute a health hazard." Fluorine can be toxic, and some of the British scientists believe they have proved that where there is undernutrition a high fluorine intake leads to skeletal deformities.

Most exasperating of all is the fact that, while there is definite proof that children's teeth have been protected by fluorine in drinking-water, differences exist in the effect not only upon children in the same town but upon teeth in the same head. Dr. Henry Klein, U. S. Dental Public Health Administrator, has studied this question and found that children

who get the most benefit from fluorine seem to have had parents with better-than-average teeth. It appears, then, that if you inherit bad teeth, fluorine cannot help you much. In other words, it tends to help those people, and those teeth, that need help least.

The whole scene swarms with paradoxes. Tea, for example, is considered one of the few foods naturally high in fluorine content. Yet the English, who drink tea in huge quantities, have probably the worst teeth of any people in the world. Naples, where the water is very low in fluorine content, has a populace with teeth that are among the best in any occidental city. Wellington, N. Z., too many of whose residents have caries, has drinking water relatively high in fluorine.

It is no wonder that so many dental experts (with and without panaceas of their own to peddle) feel that fluorine may not be a workable solution to the caries problem. Or that the ADA has been diffident about proclaiming miracles from the new "magic bullet." The *Journal* of the Association recently reviewed the history of caries therapy from the beginning of the century to the present day, recalling with some embarrassment the erroneous slogan, "A clean tooth never decays," and the many dietary recommendations that also fizzled. Trying to sidestep the fluorine controversy, it advised, with scrupulous restraint: "The dental profession must proceed cautiously in using the latest

prophylactic measure and in extolling its virtues to the public. We cannot afford another failure."

II

There are, roughly, five schools of thought about the cause and cure of caries. The designations are ours:

The Acid-Decay School. Dental caries is caused by acids, according to this school. Acids chew holes in the hard enamel shell of the tooth, exposing first the softer, inner core of dentine and then the pulp where the nerves lie. The busiest acid-producer in the mouth seems to be the bacterium *lactobacillus acidophilus*, which thrives on carbohydrates. To check decay, all that is necessary (still according to this school) is to neutralize the acids in the mouth and restrict the intake of carbohydrates, especially sugar.

It's a simple but ingenious theory, and can probably be taken as the prevailing one in the profession. Unfortunately, though, some doubters have drilled holes in it. Carbohydrates can be fermented to acids, true enough, and acids dissolve enamel. If you put an extracted tooth into a test tube and pour in almost any fruit juice, the tooth will melt quickly. But that simply doesn't happen when the tooth is in your mouth; if it did we'd all have needed false teeth long ago. The *living* tooth resists acids. Furthermore, the dissenters have asked, if acids cause cavities, why isn't the worst damage always on the enamel surface, which is most in contact

with acids? What about those teeth in which unbroken enamel camouflages cavities in the underlying dentine?

The Gottlieb School believes that acid is not responsible. The enamel, this group points out, is not 100 per cent enamel. There are threads of organic material (called *lamellae*) running through it. Thus the tooth-covering is a sort of enamel sieve, through which malevolent micro-organisms can penetrate to the dentine. Dr. Bernhard Gottlieb of Baylor University's College of Dentistry believes in blocking these channels. By impregnating the lamellae with zinc chloride or silver nitrate over a period of several years, he claims, he has reduced caries in children by 90 per cent.

Gottlieb's critics charge insufficient evidence. Nevertheless, the Gottlieb theory of the relation of tooth structure to decay seems to explain several paradoxes which stump his opponents. For example, other schools have difficulty explaining why the enamel of decaying teeth is so much more resistant to acid than that of sound teeth. Dr. Gottlieb argues that dentine and micro-organisms (*i.e.*, the organic material) resist acid action. Carious enamel therefore is more resistant to acid because it contains a larger proportion of organic material.

The mystery of teeth that seem completely immune to decay without benefit of any treatment at all is still unsolved, however. No one really knows the answer.

The Organic School disagrees with

both these groups, and with their research methods too. "We are expecting too much when we hope to find a single cause for caries and then to be able to substitute, in pill form, the missing link and have a miracle happen," writes one spokesman of the Organic School, Dr. Harold S. Jones (in *Oral Hygiene*). This school thinks of caries simply as a common disease, like a cold. It believes your resistance to tooth decay fails for one of several possible reasons: physiological, psychological or dietary. And this school believes that your teeth deteriorate for any of these reasons.

Saliva is one of the factors regarded with suspicion by nutritionists and psychosomatists in this group. Both food and emotion are known to affect the composition and amount of saliva. Do people with a good flow of saliva have less tooth decay than those whose mouths are dry? There is some evidence that they do, reports Dr. L. A. Fosdick of Northwestern University Dental School. And there the matter rests.

The Primitive Food School. "It is store food that has given us store teeth," says Dr. Earnest A. Hooton, the Harvard anthropologist and wit, summing up the case for this branch of dental thinking. The epigram appears in his preface to *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*, by Weston Price, a significant book that seems to have impressed laymen more than dentists. The author, a Cleveland dentist, roamed the world looking for people with sound teeth. He

found them principally among primitive tribes and in isolated communities, uncontaminated by civilization, where the inhabitants ate natural, locally-grown foods. He reasoned that the refined, vitamin-and-mineral-poor foods of civilized people must be responsible.

Since the immune, primitive tooth is the same in composition, structure and reaction to acids as the civilized, carious tooth, the reasoning is superficially plausible. But, as skeptics have pointed out, there are other differences between civilized and primitive men than in diet. Can anyone identify a single common denominator in primitive diets that can account for good teeth? So far no one has been able to.

The Mastication School, an old, indestructible group which believes that wear and tear are the secret of good teeth, still has enthusiastic followers. Their argument, briefly, is that bones in an unused limb lose lime and phosphate and rapidly deteriorate. Teeth are similar to bone. In an era of soft, cooked foods, teeth don't get the chance to gnaw, grind and chomp that primitive diets provide.

Yet, according to Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the explorer, primitive people are no better chewers than we are. "It would be difficult," he says, "to find a New Yorker who does not chew more and use coarser food than the South Sea Islanders did on native diets which are said to have given them, at least in some cases, better than 90 per cent freedom from caries."

Even the meat-eating, caries-free Eskimos do not chew as hard as we do. Their meat is rarely as tough as ours, and fish, of course, is seldom hard to chew.

III

Thus the enormous amount of research done on the subject has not led us to any theories about tooth decay which can be accepted with confidence. Dr. H. H. Neumann, a former medical officer of the New Zealand Health Department, has plotted the world-wide incidence of tooth decay in relation to race and environment. His data taken together form a baffling picture, as he confesses:

Reviewing the factors commonly blamed for dental decay — such as mineral deficiencies, fluorine deficiencies, poor dental hygiene, inadequate sunshine, constitutional factors, vitamin deficiencies, and over-use of starch and sugar in the diet — I conclude that they have little effect on endemic tooth decay and do not explain its peculiar geographic distribution.

By one of those amusing paradoxes that serve to confound earnest scientists, the people whom Dr. Neumann credits with the worst of all teeth — the New Zealanders — have the best general health in the world. The people of New Zealand have the lowest death rate, the lowest infant mortality, and the greatest life expectancy of any in the world. There is no shortage of vitamins (more meat per head is eaten in New Zealand than in Europe or North America).

Nor are there any signs that calcium or phosphorous is lacking. The bones of New Zealanders rarely show signs of decalcification. Rickets are rare. And the native Maoris had perfect teeth a century and a half ago when the first white settlers turned up. But today, Maori teeth, like the New Zealanders', are 90 per cent carious. The white settlers blame the drinking water, forgetting that the sound-toothed inhabitants who preceded them drank the same water.

Dr. Neumann rates occidental teeth as follows:

Southern European.....	Good
Northern European.....	Fairly Good
North American.....	Fair
English.....	Poor
Australian.....	Poorer

He discounts heredity as an explanation for these differences because "all human races are equally susceptible to dental caries, the onset of which is conditional." The trouble is that no one can identify the condition.

The condition cannot be sunshine, or the lack of it, says Neumann. In regions of abundant sunshine, teeth may be comparatively good (as in the American South) or very poor (as in South Africa, Kenya or Australia). Where the sun shines little there are, similarly, both good teeth (as among the Eskimos) and bad (as in England).

The theory of mineral deficiency doesn't stand up because poor teeth are found (a) in parts of New Zealand that have little calcium in the water,

(b) in parts of England with medium calcium levels, and (c) in sections of South Africa where the water has an extraordinary amount of calcium.

If a diet heavy in starch and carbohydrates is a factor, then how, asks Dr. Neumann, do Italians and Spaniards happen to have relatively good teeth? They eat quantities of wheat and rice pastes. Central Europeans serve (or used to, at least) potatoes, bread and sweets lavishly, yet their teeth are quite good. As for the rotting New Zealand teeth, they afflict a people who consume less starch, and more meat, eggs and cheese, and who drink more milk, than any others in the world.

Perhaps, then, oral hygiene is the answer. Americans, who have made something of a fetish of the toothbrush, would certainly like to think so. Unfortunately, the fact seems to be that the most unfastidious mouths are often free from caries. All too frequently the use of toothbrushes and dentifrices is in inverse proportion to the soundness of teeth.

Then the cause of caries might be vitamin deficiency or some other form of malnutrition. That, at least, would be something we know how to correct. But Neumann tells us that in the Kangra district of northern India the natives suffered from severe malnutrition and rickets—and had almost perfect teeth. He noted also that American prisoners of war, released with multiple vitamin deficiencies from Japanese prison camps, had con-

siderably less decay than the average for their age.

Plenty of good food in New Zealand doesn't ward off tooth decay and neither does a semi-starvation diet in Alabama bring it on. You can be so badly undernourished that you have pellagra and scurvy, and yet have good teeth. Or so four research scientists, headed by Dr. Tom D. Spies, recently reported from Hillman Hospital in Birmingham. After detailed studies of 124 half-starved patients, they found, to their astonishment, that their subjects had less than one third as many decayed, missing and filled teeth as an average group of well-fed citizens.

The lifetime diet of these food-deficient Southerners had been corn bread, syrup and fat. According to accepted doctrines, their teeth should have been ruined. But they weren't. The scientists could only conclude that tooth decay and sub-standard diets might not be as directly related as had been supposed.

IV

In 1947 a committee of 114 dentists, physicians, biochemists, nutritionists and dental health educators met at a University of Michigan workshop to review and, if possible, evaluate all caries research to date. Their summing up, published last year in the *Journal* of the ADA, revealed fewer conclusions than misgivings. They found, among other things, that:

(1) There is no evidence that cleaning by a dentist three or even more

times a year will reduce the rate of dental decay. It has never been conclusively proved that tooth-brushing does either good or harm. In fact, the committee commented, "the literature contains surprisingly little data on prophylaxis as related to caries."

(2) It has been conjectured that chewing gum is good for the teeth and also that it is harmful. There is no acceptable evidence to support either guess.

(3) Certain mouthwashes probably reduce the number of *lactobacilli* in the mouth, but there is no conclusive proof that reducing bacilli reduces caries.

(4) "Ingestion of minerals and vitamins in excess of those required for normal diet has not been demonstrated to have any relation to dental caries."

There is an increasing amount of skepticism about milk as the *sine qua non* of sturdy teeth. Dr. H. H. Stone of the University of Liverpool School of Dentistry observes that it has been "proved" that milk after weaning reduces caries and also that it makes no difference whatsoever. Dr. Philip Jay, director of the University of Michigan's Dental Caries Research Laboratory, has torpedoed the popular belief that milk is good for adults' teeth because it provides them with calcium. Dr. Jay says that once tooth enamel is formed (in childhood) noth-

ing can be added to — or subtracted from — it.

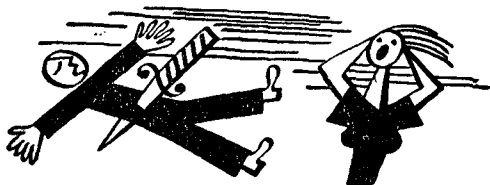
As for sweets, one can compute the evidence pro and con without learning much that is definite. Captain J. D. King of Great Britain's Medical Research Council reported in the *Lancet*, England's leading medical journal: "The popular theory that sweets and chocolate cause teeth to decay is not supported by investigations carried out over a period of up to two years upon young children of an age when rapid growth is obtained." These fortunate youngsters were fed candy, in some cases to excess, just before they went to bed and just after they cleaned their teeth. No increase in caries activity was found. "Indeed," reports Captain King, "at the end of the test, previously active caries became arrested."

Presumably it is safe to have cavities plugged, abscesses drained, and vacancies filled. But that is about as much as anyone can advise us to do with certainty. For the time being, at least, the wisest course may be to keep our minds open and our mouths shut when more drastic corrective measures are proposed.

Until the stalemate in dental theory ends, and we get something pretty positive to go on, we can't do any really authoritative worrying. Perhaps it is just as well. Anxiety and tension are possibly factors in tooth decay. We may as well leave the worrying to the dental scientists.

THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



CLINICAL NOTES

Actresses As Inebriates. Nothing more impresses the average critic than an actress portraying a drunken woman. That it is almost impossible for her to fail in the depiction of a sot, that the job is one of the easiest to bring off in the whole histrionic catalogue, and that it ranks on a par with the nonsense which Shaw exposed so handsomely in Irving's performance of a creaking old gaffer in *Waterloo*, the reviewer seemingly cannot persuade himself to believe. Let an actress, however otherwise inferior, come on the stage with dishevelled hair, speak as if she had a blotter in her mouth, and steady herself on the back of a chair once in a while and most critics will write of her, particularly if she remembers to pick up her drink with trembling hands and spill a little of it on her dress, as if she were an extraordinary artiste. And if she subsequently plods up a flight of stairs holding unsteadily to the banister, they will be so overcome by her genius that their reviews of her will quiver with awe.

Parisian Atmosphere. Happily departed is the day when American producers of revues concluded that what was wrong with their shows was that they lacked a Parisian atmosphere. Having arrived at the conclusion, it was their habit promptly to set about correcting the lack by dressing up the ticket-takers in the lobbies like Austrian artillery majors; inserting numbers into the revues in which the smaller chorus girls, most of them visibly of Irish and Polish extraction, sang "We Wee-wees Always Say Oui-Oui," to an accompaniment of savage winks at the audience; incorporating a tableau in which a female in white strip-tights lay prostrate at the feet of a fierce chorus boy whose face, arms and torso were smeared with lamp-black (it usually bore some such slightly enigmatic title as "Primitive Virtue"); and putting a sign over the door leading to the men's lavatory reading *Pour les Messieurs*. This successfully accomplished, they naturally became much put out when subsequently the reviewers saw fit to express certain doubts as to the entire

authenticity of the French atmosphere and delivered themselves of uncalled for smartcracks about a revue named *Passetemps Parisiens* whose chief features were a team of German acrobats, an American vaudeville trained seal, a cockney skit lifted from the London *Nine O'Clock Revue*, and a spectacular finale called "The Apotheosis of Baseball."

Not less suspect than the French atmosphere, however, were those reviewers of the time who made mock of it in the belief that French atmosphere was something quite different and immeasurably more exciting. For if the Parisian atmosphere evoked by the local producers was approximately as Gallic as *sauerbraten*, the Parisian atmosphere evoked by their French counterparts was as Gallic as *sauerbraten mit preiselbeeren*.

Legend, of course, had exercised its sweet will upon the parochial critics and had conjured up for them the usual visions of beautiful women, their skirts up around their ears, prancing on table-tops the while gay boulevardiers quaffed champagne from their satin slippers; of handsome lieutenants of Cuirassiers lounging lasciviously on rear divans, puffing languidly at cigarettes filled with opium, and making negligée eyes at all the ladies; of revue stages so witty that Congreve and Sheridan enviously tossed in their tombs; of wenches so devilish and agitating that no French octogenarian had need of Steinach; of melodies as soft and insinuating as amorous eels; and of a general air of

gayety and abandon the like of which one could find nowhere else on the planet. Legend, ever careless, had not seen fit to impart to them the unlegendary truth that the French atmosphere in such revue theatres as the Folies Bergère, Olympia, Cigale, Marigny and Moulin Rouge consisted mainly rather of a dozen dirty jokes, two dozen chorus girls in the alto-gether and almost as dirty, a saucy animadversion on Briand, and a rear promenade in which street-walkers ogled for trade and in which one might drop a sou in a slot and weigh one's self. But legend dies hard and lost upon the reviewers was the fact that there was infinitely more of the hypothetical French atmosphere in a Ziegfeld *Follies* or, for that matter, in the Winter Garden or Earl Carroll revues than ever one encountered in its supposed diocese.

That the producers of our revues in later years have rid themselves of the old bosh and that, were they to indulge in it, the present-day more traveled reviewers would laugh them out of countenance is one of the most encouraging symptoms of an improved revue theatre. Some of the later shows may not be too good but, good or not, they are at least unaffectedly American, and that is a very large and intelligent point in their favor.

Imagination Stimulus. The peculiar idea that only first-rate drama is successful in stimulating the imagination calls, I think, for some critical scrutiny. The imagination implicit in such

drama is generally so rich and satisfying that it leaves nothing for the auditor further to imagine. His fancy is so fully nourished that no food remains. The dramatist has taken over completely and all that the auditor can do is to surrender to his starry spell. A play like *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Peer Gynt*, or *The Sunken Bell* clogs any supplementary flight of the fancy; it does the job for the person who attends it. And so with most of the world's fine plays.

It is only the second-rate, third-rate or fourth-rate play that, deficient in imagination, encourages independent imagination in the spectator. It piques his disappointment into fanciful wings of his own. It stimulates imagination by virtue of imagination's very absence. As with a starved man's vision of a banquet, the auditor dreams and, dreaming, finds his imagination whetted. The poor play, as a matter of fact, imposes the necessity of so much imagination upon him that it often completely exhausts him.

Standard. There can be only one standard in criticism, the highest. Too many critics' tastes are catholic when they should be unitarian.

Women And Music Shows. I have yet to meet a woman who really likes music shows, however much, to ingratiate herself with her beau, she may lie convincingly to the contrary. Opera and operetta, yes; and also possibly the higher grade musical comedy; but the music show, the

show which depends mostly on low comedians and pretty girls, no. She will politely go to such shows if her man wills it; she will even pretend to enjoy them; but they actually bore her to death.

The reason is not difficult to make out. Women do not like low comedians and, certainly, women hardly have the time of their lives looking at pretty girls. If and when the latter are dressed in a particularly attractive manner, the costumes will interest them, but the girls still will not, with the possible exception of the one who seems especially to fascinate their escorts' attention. Nor are women fetched, and naturally, by the men in the show, save maybe by the lead, if sufficiently good-looking. The chorus boys are usually of an effeminate cut and hence are scarcely the sexual magnets that the chorus girls are, and the women rightly gag at them. Why the ladies seem never to be as amused by the low comics as men are, I don't know. It can't be credited to their vulgarity, since women, however refined, have enjoyed the comic vulgarity in Shakespeare, the Restoration drama, and many a modern play. The fact remains, however, that not one woman in twenty finds herself entertained by even a Bobby Clark one-twentieth so much as a man does.

Sartre. Jean-Paul Sartre, the current darling of the sub-intellectuals, manages always in his plays to seem on the point of a profundity that never materializes. He gives the impression of

a man rushing toward an ocean of thought, plunging in, and emerging all dry, like one of the chorus girls who used to descend into the old Hippodrome tank. His reliance upon melodrama for facile effect provides the further picture of a man poised perilously on a high window ledge, to the acquiescent palpitation of the onlookers below, and who finally makes the jump only to land in a net.

English Composers. The decline of the British empire is no more perceptible than in the total disappearance from its map of talented English light operetta and musical comedy composers. Think of those of yesterday: Sidney Jones, Lionel Monckton, Leslie Stuart, Ivan Caryll, Paul Rubens, Edward German, Howard Talbot, *et al.* Then try to think of one Englishman today who is in any way their equal.

Query? Why is it that a play, however poor, if written in verse, whether rhymed or blank and however in turn poor, usually induces a greater sobriety in most drama critics than a better play written in prose?

In Passing. Opinion based on purely relative values has corrupted more drama criticism than even the charm and beauty of inferior actresses.

Cost. Twenty-five years ago a play could be put on for \$10,000. or less. Today the production of the same play costs five or six times as much.

This is argued to doom the theatre.

Twenty-five years ago you could get a good dinner for a dollar. Today the same dinner similarly costs five or six times as much, yet nobody thinks of arguing that this dooms the human appetite.

Sacha Guitry. The basic formula of the Guitry comedy is the sex triangle or, if Sacha happens at the moment to be of a more acutely sexual frame of mind in respect to himself, quadrangle. The rôle he elects for himself is customarily that of a slightly world-weary and cynical post-graduate of the school of active biology who is still craved, despite his considerate allusions to himself as a middle-aged and settled man of 45 (or, if generously over-critical, 46), by his present and past wives, let alone by all his former mistresses. It is his especial pleasure to preside over the desperate efforts of these ladies in the cast to renew amorous relations with him and either to discourage them from their dreams with fillets of pessimistic philosophy or resignedly to accept their importunities with reluctant lapses into a sentiment which embraces recollections of one-time affairs or honeymoons at Deauville, Monte Carlo or on the Riviera when the moon turned the sea to silver, when the smell of jasmine permeated their little bedroom, and when Spring kissed away the clouds.

Whether calling himself Daniel Bachelet, Marcel Chambertin, Jean-Pierre or what not, it is Sacha of

whom Guitry always writes. And, whether the ladies be named Madeleine, Valentine, Julie, Angèle, Marie-Jeanne or anything else, their single purpose, for all an occasional unfaithfulness or two, is either to regain the affections of Sacha or to convince him, after they have taken up with other men, that he is the only one they ever truly loved. It must be a wonderful life and I sorely envy him.

Here, poor worm, I still sit in my late years writing vicariously of such delights when I might have been a playwright and, like Sacha, had a super-elegant time glorifying myself night after night for more than three whole decades as a wit, beauty, and lover proclaimed by innumerable exquisite young actresses as having seldom been surpassed in the history of the modern world. I am a big fool.

SNAPSHOT, ENLARGED

BY CAROLYN WILSON LINK

Tracking the source of trouble in his house,
I found at last on a neglected shelf,
(Dust on the frame, a crack across the glass)
This shadow of yourself

Against the wall of what forgotten place
God knows; your hair, a bronze and burnished bell,
Still swinging 'round the bony scrap of face
Your will made beautiful.

Other loves own this house; love comes and goes
Like summer storms here, violent as hate,
And leaving no refreshment nor repose.
But now it is too late,

Too late to smash the glass and rip the clever
Face, the long, speaking fingers into bits.
He bears within the faded print he never
Remembers or forgets.

TALES OF THE COYOTE

BY J. FRANK DOBIE

THE higher the intelligence of any species, the more variations there are in thought and conduct among individuals of that species. The degree of their uniformity is in ratio to either the dulness or the dormancy of their intellects. Sheeplike people fear any divergency from the walled trails in which they spend their lives walking up and down. They come to believe, often passionately, that the walls and trails are sacred, and that anybody who jumps out or points out a new trail is anti-social, subversive, at best, "a crackpot." Coyotes are probably not as intelligent as the most sheeplike human beings, but on their own level of intelligence they often exhibit extraordinarily individualistic conduct. And they have often demonstrated an astounding ability to organize their efforts cooperatively.

While I may doubt — I am not sure that I do — the eyesight or the veracity of the author of the following relation, I am convinced that what he describes could have happened. Lieutenant Wise of the U. S. Army, in California during the Mexican War, relates that one day while hunt-

ing in the hills near Monterey, he saw three coyotes. "I blazed away," he says, "with the carbine, which brought one of them tumbling down the steep, but, much to my surprise, his two friends followed and actually bolstered up their wounded comrade and assisted him out of sight before I could send another bullet."

I have yet to find a trapper who puts any credence in the often-repeated assertion that coyotes bring food to one of their tribe held in a trap. In his lifetime Enos Mills was accused of nature-faking; but the fact is that he made many acute observations that were acceptable to naturalists. After commenting on the commonly-known efforts of parent coyotes to divert human beings from a den, he says: "I have also seen one or more coyotes stay near a crippled coyote as though taking care of him, and attempt to lure away any hunter who approached."

Such conduct would not be contrary to the nature of the species. The fang-and-claw conception of life in the wild has been grossly over-emphasized by a civilization devoted

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— often unconsciously — to propagating the philosophy of greed. In a book of revolutionary thought, *Mutual Aid*, which Prince Kropotkin began to publish in 1890, he adduces many instances of social consciousness among animals. A weasel picked up and carried away an injured comrade; a wounded badger was likewise rescued; a blind pelican in Utah was well fed by other pelicans on fish they had to carry thirty miles; two crows brought food to a wounded crow in a hollow tree.

It is in catching game that coyote cooperation seems most cunning, at times taking the form of carefully pre-arranged strategy. Bob Beverly of Lovington, New Mexico, is one of the cowboys of open range days who sees and who meditates while remembering, as his privately printed *Hobo of the Range Land* evidences. In 1896, he writes in a letter, he was riding for the big Quien Sabe Ranch on the plains in the vicinity of Midland, Texas. One day in the fall he and another hand named Barnes Tillous were passing near some dry lakes of salt grass. It had been burned during the summer and now, after a rain, it was fresh and green. At this time of year sandhill cranes migrated south by the tens of thousands.

"As Barnes Tillous and I rode along," Bob Beverly says, "we spotted a large bunch of the cranes in the grass about a mile off. They were gathered close together and from the way their necks were stretched up they

seemed to be watching something. Then I noticed a coyote in the grass, off three or four hundred yards, turning somersaults and running round and round, keeping all the cranes intent on him.

"'You see that coyote?' I asked Tillous.

"'Yes,' he replied, 'but over there is the one they had better be watching,' and he pointed to grass back behind the cranes.

"I looked and saw another coyote slipping along, nearly crawling on the ground, keeping a bunch of sagebrush between him and the cranes. We stopped and sat there on our horses to watch the show. As the crawling coyote got nearer and nearer, the one that was doing the acting jumped higher and cut more capers. He was working faster and faster to hold the attention of the cranes.

"In a little while the coyote slipping up got as close as he wanted to get, about thirty yards I would say. He made a jump and ran full speed for the cranes. They require some time to take off, and the coyote caught one before it left the ground. The actor-coyote had farther to run, and by the time he got to the spot all the cranes were gone except the one held by his *compadre*. He grabbed it, and right there they tore the crane in two and had a feast of fresh *carne*."

II

A typical prairie dog hole goes down almost perpendicularly from ten to twenty feet, extends out hori-

zontally an equal length, and has side chambers. It is protected against surface flows of water by a funnel-shaped mound from six inches to a foot high. The inhabitants keep their grounds cleared of weeds that enemies can lurk behind, and they refuse to burrow against brush and trees. They are strictly diurnal in habits. They are always on the lookout and warn each other of danger by incessant barking and chattering. Their enemies are varied: snakes that glide, hawks and eagles that fly, and all the carnivores — wolves, coyotes, skunks, foxes, badgers, wild cats and even hungry panthers. As General R. I. Dodge said, the prairie dog “has no more dog about him than the gray squirrel.” (Had he been given another name, carnivorous white men would have joined Pueblo Indians and coyotes in eating the animal.) When pursued, a prairie dog will dive into a neighbor’s fortress if it is more accessible than his own. The animals are always in the vicinity of their holes. The enemy that catches one on top of the ground must exercise surprise and strategy. Coyotes have devised many strategies for catching them.

In some ways Don Alberto Guajardo of Coahuila, Mexico, was the most interesting man of the *campo* — the whole outdoors — that I have ever known. One time during his boyhood, he told me, he went out deer-hunting with an old Lipan Indian. They were skulking in scattered brush on a mountainside over-

looking a valley well populated with prairie dogs. The sky was dark and threatening rain. While they were looking, listening, lingering, the sound of a great barking of prairie dogs came up to them. Then Don Alberto noticed a coyote on the edge of the prairie dog town, close to the base of the mountain. He had not seen the hunters. He went to scratching at a dog hole into which his approach had sent the owner, all neighbors having retreated into their holes also.

“Surely,” said Don Alberto to the old Lipan, “that coyote is not crazy enough to think he can dig down to the bottom of a prairie dog hole.”

“No, no,” replied the Indian, waving his finger back and forth to accent the negation. “The coyote knows what he is doing. Wait with patience and you shall see.”

By now thunder was rolling up. Even people without coyote prescience on weather matters could tell that it was going to rain. The plan of the engineer at the prairie dog hole became apparent. He was pulling down the crater-like mounds around two or three holes and using the dirt to throw up a rough V-shaped dam, the flanges pointed uphill and enclosing one of the holes near the apex. Presently the heavens turned loose. The rain was a regular “gully-washer and fence-lifter.” It rained pitchforks and bobtailed heifer yearlings. The water scooted down the mountain-side in sheets. That caught by the coyote’s dam poured into the hole. Meantime the coyote had placed

himself in a waiting position just downward from the apex. The typical prairie dog hole has a roomy side-tunnel, or station, not a great distance below the mouth, where the owner and his family can remain clear of water going on down to the bottom. Many a boy trying to drown out a prairie dog has learned that a few buckets of water are not enough. But here a stream was being diverted into the hole. As the torrent of rain slackened, the two watchers on the mountainside saw a prairie dog emerge for air, only to be nabbed by the ingenious coyote.

III

Some years ago I spent a night and a day with H. C. (Pete) Gamison at his cabin overlooking Eagle Nest Lake in northern New Mexico. At that time Gamison had spent towards half a century on the trails of wild animals. His English training for a doctor's career contributed to his civilized perspective on nature.

One time, he told me, he watched a pair of coyotes out to catch a prairie dog. They tracked leisurely along, one right behind the other, towards the edge of a prairie dog town. Presently there was a great chattering at them, though the prairie dog they were headed for could see only the lead coyote, the one behind keeping his head down and his body hidden by that of the first. When near the mound on which the prairie dog stood nervously scolding, the lead coyote made a rush, and of course the prairie

dog ducked. The sun was shining from a clear sky, and the coyote, leaping over the hole, darkened it with his shadow. He went on, other prairie dogs chattering and ducking, the noise growing dimmer as he passed.

But the second coyote had stopped when the first one leaped, and while the play was going on, he flattened himself out as much as he could behind the dog mound. There he waited until the prairie dog should come up. After a considerable while, it reappeared, looking intently towards the enemy that had threatened and passed but was still in sight. It is the nature of a prairie dog to look for what has scared him. He is so low on the ground that his vision across level terrain is very limited; he sits upon his tail to raise his vision — sits and barks. While this one was indulging its nature, expressing sharp displeasure at the same time, the coyote accomplice made a leap and caught it. Then there was a tussle over the morsel, the two coyotes soon tearing it to pieces and devouring it.

Three days after leaving Pete Gamison, I called on Ernest Thompson Seton at Seton Village, a few miles out from Santa Fe. He was past eighty then; for two hours he poured out talk on the wild white cattle of Chillingham, in England, and on coyotes. Tears of sympathy came into his eyes as he described the agony of one that had been strychnined. He vividly delineated cooperative strategy on prairie dogs very much as Pete Gamison had delineated it. As I was

leaving, I bought a copy of his *Trail of an Artist-Naturalist*, the story of Seton's life. That night I read in it the mapped maneuvers of Coyote No. 1 and Coyote No. 2 at the prairie dog town.

A trail-driver and cowman of the old days named J. W. Maltsberger, of Cotulla, Texas, has still another story. Early one morning many years ago, up on the plains, he tells, he saw a coyote stopping up prairie dog holes with dirt. After stopping up a few holes, the coyote retired and took a position behind some other holes. He did not have to wait a great while before the prairie dogs, eager to get to their breakfast, reemerged. Now he kept quiet until one of them moved out towards the holes he had just plugged. Then he made a dash for it. The prairie dog, cut off from retreating into its own burrow, made for a neighbor's. But the door was closed. For a second the prairie dog hesitated at the refuge so unexpectedly vanished. The hesitation cost him his life.

IV

Coyotes relaying each other in the chase of the swift jack rabbit have been witnessed many times. Once I saw the end of a chase by two coyotes, the one that finally picked the rabbit up coming so close and becoming so scared at discovering me, standing in tall switch mesquite, that it dropped the rabbit. A coyote can gain on a jack rabbit running down hill, but the jack outdistances him uphill. Prob-

ably no coyote could overtake a jack rabbit that ran straight ahead without circling, but nearly all chased animals circle. Thus, two or three coyotes working together can take turns cutting across circles and making stands.

Jack rabbits wax and wane in numbers by cycles. The year 1898 was one of the drouthy years in southern Texas and jack rabbits seemed to be taking the country. Tom Coleman of the vast Callaghan Ranch, much of it prairie, engaged George Bigford to kill them at five cents a head.

Bigford witnessed a coyote maneuver that I have never seen or heard reported by any other man. He said that one day he saw about eight coyotes rounding up a considerable number of jack rabbits, bringing them into a loose huddle from various directions. The coyotes had no pen to drive them into, as the rabbit-drivers of the West use. They simply got the rabbits into a concentration, approaching from all sides. Then one coyote dashed in and caught, the others quickly following. They were so close in and the rabbits were so numerous and confused in scattering every which way that every coyote seemed to make a catch.

Coyotes know how to drive inexperienced deer over the crest of a ridge into deep-crusts of snow, through which the sharp-hoofed ones break at every jump, while on padded feet the coyotes skim across the crust, to surround and finally bring one down. In soft snow they are at a disadvan-

tage. They work in pairs to catch ground squirrels, one skulking along a ridge while the other scurries them up from open ground below.

The antelope is noted for its headstrong instinct to go in a direct line. One headed straight across a road in front of a fast-running car will sometimes dash into it rather than swerve — provided the driver of the car is also as headstrong. But in the end a chased antelope will usually circle so that the chasers can relay each other, just as mustangers used to run down wild horses. One plainsman recounts having sat on his horse for two hours watching three coyotes chase an antelope while the circles grew smaller, the coyotes on the inside of it cutting across shorter and shorter distances until they finally downed the animal.

The hounding of antelopes sometimes proves to be a dangerous business for coyotes, and disproves the popular idea that this animal never takes risks on his game. Ray Williams, who was for several years employed by the Texas Game Commission to study the antelope and report on its relationship to the range and to other animals, told me that one June he watched eight grown antelopes run a coyote for twelve miles. The coyote finally took refuge in a thornless bush called *clepino*. There the antelopes went to jumping on him with their knived hooves. A buck hooked him out — dead. Antelope defense, and even aggression, against coyotes is well established.

The grown antelope that coyotes destroy are usually sick or disabled; the same is generally true of grown deer. Their predations on deer and antelope are largely confined to the young, and to catch fawns two or three of them habitually work together, one worrying the mother while the other kills. If the doe did not become intent on chasing off a threatener, thus leaving her young exposed, she could, by staying beside the fawns, protect them with her sharp hooves. Coyotes seldom gang up into packs like gray wolves, overcoming prey by sheer numbers; they have, however, a keener organizing, or strategic, faculty. They employ it on sows and peccaries with pigs, occasionally on a cow or elk with a newborn calf, and also on does.

In being chased, as well as in chasing, the coyote shows his instinct for cooperation. Instances of it that have come my way seem, however, not so well authenticated as those of the coyote as chaser, and they seem to reflect individuals of the species more than the species in general. For a generation Pete Crawford has been noted as guide and hunter up and down the Rio Grande and over the Big Bend area of Texas. It must be said, also, that Pete Crawford early mastered the art of entertaining his hunter and explorer guests. This is one of his experiences.

In 1926 he and two other men were driving in a car along the road over the open, flat country between

Valentine and Fort Davis when they saw a coyote and gave chase. To overtake the animal was no trouble, but its sharp and quick turns kept them going for seven miles, according to the speedometer. By this time the coyote was so exhausted that it had great difficulty in dodging away from the wheels. Then, without having before been visible, a second coyote put himself, or perhaps herself, right in front of the car. After running alongside the exhausted coyote for a bit, it gradually angled away, seemingly in an attempt to draw the car after it. "It acted like a bird trying to entice a person away from its nest. There could be no doubt that it was trying to help the winded coyote." Pete Crawford and his companions took the dare, just for the sake of sport, but about this time the played-out coyote got through a fence, and then both of them made away.

It would have been natural for the coyote first pursued to make towards its mate and then, for the mate, seeing the circumstances, to intervene. Leon V. Almirall, a constant hunter of coyotes in the Northwest, saw one of his dogs chase two coyotes, catch up with the laggard of the two and get the better of it in fighting until the

second coyote, which had escaped, came back and dashed into battle. The two made the dog retreat. Had a whole pack of hounds been attacking the first coyote, the second might not have stayed; then again it might.

It is not uncommon for a female coyote whose immature offspring is being chased by hounds to spring in behind the pup, zigzag back and forth across the trail, and linger until the hounds get close enough to follow her. If they follow — and only the best-trained hounds will resist such a temptation to switch — she will strike out in a direction contrary to that taken by her young one. In the Pearsall brush of South Texas, hunters came to know well a pair of coyotes that they named Jim Ferguson and Ma Ferguson. If the dogs started Jim Ferguson and got hot after him, he would circle into Ma Ferguson's vicinity, and before long the dogs would be after her. If they started Ma, sometimes with a half-grown pup, she would be relieved in time by Jim. They afforded sport to hunters for four or five years, and so far as is known, neither of this pair ever was hounded down. As among men, it is the exceptional coyotes who have biographies.



THE SKEPTICS' CORNER

by BERGEN EVANS



*That alimony payments cease
when a divorced woman
remarries*

This will-o'-the-wisp has led many a wretched man into alimony row. Only California, Connecticut, Montana, New York and Louisiana make any such merciful provision.

One man's poison, however, is another man's mate. Aubrey tells us that when Sir Kenelm Digby "married that celebrated beautie and courtezane, Mrs. Venetia Stanley, whom Richard earle of Dorset kept as his concubine" the noble earl delicately ceased payment on the annuity which he had settled upon the lady. But Sir Kenelm, solicitous of his wife's interests, as a good husband should be, sued his lordship and compelled him to continue his bounty, thereby setting posterity a bold example.

That fish are mute

When Mr. Bob Becker, the Outdoor Editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, told a

woman who wrote in to inquire where she could buy a fish caller that so far as he knew no such thing existed and someone must have been kidding her, he was soon informed by correspondents from 38 different states that he was shockingly uninformed. Subaqueous bloopers and bleepers of all kinds were described to him and samples sent in.

Mr. Becker's initial error, probably, was in sharing the common assumption that fish are mute. It is a widespread error. Did not Christian Morgenstern, an impressionist German poet of the twenties, write his famous "Night Song of the Fishes" wholly without words, a blank page of stresses and diacritical signs? Are not fish proverbial for keeping still?

They are, but they do not deserve to be. Fishermen have known for ages that some fish make noises. Agassiz wrote a paper on the sounds of the catfish. During the war the Navy found that fish noises interfered with the operation of underwater listening devices and threatened to cause premature firing of acoustic

mines. Something had to be done and a group of savants, under Mr. Milton Dobrin of Columbia University, were assigned to record and classify fish noises for the guidance of those who used the Navy's hydrophones. Mr. Dobrin has described some of their findings in *Science* (January 3, 1947) and the *Technology Review* (March 1947). Hogfish grunt, Croakers croak, Drumfish emit "rapid drum rolls resembling the sound of an electric drill being driven into asphalt," Toadfish, the noisiest of all, "produce . . . an intermittent, low-pitched musical blast . . . somewhat similar to a boat whistle," the Spot gives off raucous honks, the Sea Robin squeals, squawks and cackles, the Triggerfish crunches and the Snapping Shrimp crackles. All in all, when they are in full chorus, usually in the evening, the aggregate clamor of an ordinary collection of fish makes a forge seem a fairly quiet spot.

The noises are obtained in various ways. Some fish gnash their teeth. Some stroke their swim bladders with special muscles — as you stroke a balloon with your thumb. Some vibrate the bladder. Some are thought to rub their vertebræ together. All have ears and seem to listen.

*That drinking sea water causes
men to go mad*

Millions of sportive sea bathers have swallowed millions of pints of sea water without demonstrating any madness other than that which took

them into the surf in the first place. Yet it is widely believed that shipwrecked men, racked with thirst, will go mad if they drink sea water.

Since sea water will not slake thirst but only intensify it and produce severe gastritis to boot, a man suffering from thirst would probably have to be out of his mind to drink it. And that may be the true order of events: shipwrecked men have their minds unsettled through starvation, exhaustion and exposure and then drink sea water.

*That in order to disinherit a
wife or child some small sum
must be left them*

When Mr. John Koenig of Chicago recently left his wife \$10 and willed the bulk of his \$200,000 estate to another woman, he was, apparently, conforming to the popular belief that a disinheritance is not effective unless some small sum is left to the disinherited. In England the phrase is "cutting him (or her) off with a shilling."

The only value of such bequests is to show that the exclusion was deliberate, for in almost all jurisdictions (says Atkinson *On Wills*) the pretermitted child "may take his intestate share against the will." And even then their efficacy is dubious. Many jurisdictions protect wives and children against any such deprivation. In Louisiana, for example, children cannot be disinherited. In Illinois the widow may renounce her husband's

will and claim her "widow's share." Mrs. Koenig may thus choose between \$10 and one third of her husband's personal property and one half of his real estate.

*That the pregnant woman must
"eat for two"*

Life is dull for a pregnant woman and until quite recently was even duller. Eating was one of the few pleasures permitted and its excesses were frequently justified by the assertion that a pregnant mother had to "eat for two."

Of course she does. But that doesn't mean that she has to take a second helping every time. All that the foetus is or hopes to be he owes to his angel mother, but so far as mere bulk goes that isn't so much when spread over approximately 840 meals. Modern gynecologists usually try to stop their patients from eating too much; it adds to the weight they must carry around and hence to their exhaustion.

A contrary idea which is gaining in popularity is that if the mother diets herself severely the child will be smaller and hence she will have an easier delivery. But investigations do not always bear this out. Some obstetricians claim to have reduced the weight of babies by dieting the mothers, but it was observed that despite the restricted diet forced upon Germany and Austria in World War I the weight of newborn infants did not decrease. And investigations in England, says Guttmacher, have shown

that though income and calories in the diet are directly related, the average birth-weight is almost identical in the three income classes.

In the layman, at least, the belief is posited on the assumption that there is a wholesome camaraderie between mother and foetus and that it's share and share alike; if the mother pushes away the tempting pie the foetus will restrain *himself* too. But, alas, such are not the ways of nature. The foetus is a parasite. It will take whatever it wants when it can in complete disregard of the noble character of its host.

*That mad dogs foam at the
mouth*

"Foaming at the mouth" has become a synonym for madness. Some human beings do salivate excessively when enraged and drool in a ludicrous and repulsive manner that only heightens their fury.

But mad dogs do not foam at the mouth. In the last stages of rabies when the swollen throat no longer permits the afflicted animal to swallow, saliva drips from its mouth in long strings.

*That snakes move with a waving
vertical motion*

Cartoonists frequently represent snakes as moving with a wave-like vertical motion, resting their bodies on a series of lower bends while the alternate bends are raised in the air.

The sea-serpent, in particular, is addicted to this form of motion, possibly to enable journalists to identify him.

Real snakes move in a horizontal plane, "scrooching" themselves along on their ribs and scales, pushing themselves forward against small fixed objects. On a perfectly smooth surface they cannot move at all.

Two other misconceptions concerning the motion of snakes are that they climb trees by spiralling the trunk and that in striking they leave the ground. Those that climb trees merely scrooch up the bark. Those that strike dart the retracted forepart of their bodies forward. Cobras advance the hinder parts simultaneously, sinuously along the ground. But rattlers, which are most frequently depicted as jumping, keep their hinder parts stationary.

That finders are keepers

The law generally holds that the loser retains "constructive possession" of the object lost and that the finder must give it up on proof of ownership. Whether the finding constitutes theft or not depends upon the intent of the finder at the moment of finding, a consideration bordering upon the metaphysical. Further scope for legal subtlety is afforded by the question of whether the object was lost or abandoned.

Treasure is usually claimed by the State, though the finder is allowed a share of it. "Jetsam, flotsam, lagan

or derelict" belonged in the English law to the lord of the manor if it were above the high-water mark (though how true flotsam could ever get there was never stated) and to the crown if it were between high and low water marks. Finders, again, were customarily assigned a share.

There was formerly a grim belief among coastal folk that a body washed ashore was derelict, a belief that unquestionably produced bodies where there might have been survivors. Admiral Sir Clowdisley Shovell, commander in chief of the British fleet, was dispatched in this manner, in 1707 by an old woman at Porthellick Cove as he struggled ashore after the loss of his ship among the rocks of the Scilly Islands. The hag is said to have observed an emerald ring on the admiral's finger and to have taken what she felt were the proper steps to insure the legality of her possession of it.

That owls are afraid of the daylight

Though the owl is a nocturnal predator it does not have the aversion to light commonly ascribed to it. "Notwithstanding the popular belief," wrote Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, of the owls in the London zoo, "they pass most of their time in full exposure to the light and are fond of sunning themselves." The *Encyclopædia Britannica* states that short-eared owls, in particular, "are often seen abroad in the daytime."

MEMORIES OF THE OLD MASSES

BY FLOYD DELL

ONE noontime in December 1913 I was striding absentmindedly up Greenwich Avenue in New York City. I was 26 years old, recently from Chicago, where I had been a literary editor; now I was a "free-lance" and a Greenwich villager.

Somebody said: "Hey, stop, Floyd," and I was grasped and turned about in the other direction by a large, friendly young man, Horatio Winslow, a humorist on the staff of *Puck*. "You're wanted back here," he said. "In Gallup's."

Gallup's was a restaurant that I had just passed. We went back there, and I sat down at a table with several men that I knew. I had no idea what they wanted of me, except perhaps a short story or article. They were all connected with the socialist-and-art magazine called the *Masses*. It was an honor to be published in the *Masses*, but it didn't pay anything. So I said "Hello" and waited for them to say what they wanted.

One of them was Max Eastman, a lecturer on feminism and humor, formerly a philosophy professor at

Columbia, and now editor of the *Masses*. I had heard about how he got the job. He had been sent a letter written with a brush on drawing-paper and signed by twenty artists and writers. The letter had said: "You are elected editor of the *Masses*. No pay." And so, being that kind of goop, he had taken the job.

Another of those there at Gallup's was Jack Reed, not long out of Harvard, a poet and short-story writer who had recently been active in organizing a great pageant in Madison Square Garden for the benefit of the striking shirtwaist-makers in Paterson, New Jersey. He, too, had been roped in by that bunch of artists and writers to help edit the *Masses*. I had seen him in the *Masses* office, up to his neck in work. But, as I knew, he was making his escape. *Collier's* had commissioned him to go to Mexico to write articles about the revolution that was going on there, led by Carranza, Villa and Zapata.

He said to me, gently but firmly: "Floyd, you are going to help edit the *Masses*. You know about make-up

FLOYD DELL, in addition to working five years on the *Masses*, has written many novels and plays, with Moon-Calf perhaps his best-known book. He contributed a remembrance of pre-World War I bohemia, "Rents Were Low in Greenwich Village," to the December 1947 *MERCURY*. This article is the eleventh in a series on American magazines and newspapers.

and such things. You will attend to all that, while Max writes the editorials. Your title will be associate editor."

"Look ——" I said.

He raised his hand. "Wait a minute. We have a surprise for you. We are going to pay you a salary. How much did you get paid on the Chicago *Evening Post*?"

I told him, and he said: "You won't get paid that much on this job. Your salary will be twenty-five dollars a week."

I said: "Let me make a brief statement. Bohemian ways are all right in some respects, but not, in my view, when it comes to money matters. I know how it is over at the *Masses*' office. Sometimes the office force doesn't get paid because there isn't any money. But I expect to be paid whether there is any money or not. The first time I don't get paid, I won't say anything. The next time I don't get paid, I won't say anything, either, but I won't be there any more."

They said that was fair enough; and so, without further protest, I became associate editor of the *Masses*. Its office was at 91 Greenwich Avenue, near the old Jefferson Market Court. There, at a battered desk, I read proofs and prepared a dummy of the next issue. Max Eastman, tall, handsome, lazy-looking, strolled in and I submitted the dummy to him. He thought it could be improved. We sat down, took it all apart and pasted it all up again. "I didn't know this was such interesting work," said Eastman, looking at his hand, which had

paste dripping from the fingers. "It's fascinating."

I took the dummy to the printer's, down under Brooklyn Bridge, stayed around and saw the January issue through the press. Then, back at my desk, I read contributions that came in by mail, laid some aside to be read at the monthly meeting, and met the *Masses*' artists and writers who came in to leave their stuff and look me over. There appeared the short, pudgy figure and round, benign face of Art Young, cartoonist. John Sloan, the painter, may have brought in one of those intense and fiery drawings in which he was presenting the current outrages against human rights. Those two were important figures on the *Masses*. Besides being artists, they were intellectuals, socialists with strong convictions, witty talkers and delightful company. Some other *Masses* artists, Stuart Davis and Glenn Coleman, came in and glowered at me silently. They were the kind of young modern artists who don't talk; at most, they muttered monosyllables at one another out of the corners of their mouths. Maybe they didn't like me. Anyway, I was a literary guy, and they had respect only for artists; I used words, and they had no use whatever for words.

II

One and all, I met them in some artist's studio at the monthly meeting — an editorial institution peculiar to the *Masses* and already locally famous. Stories, poems and pictures were

brought there to be discussed and voted on. The discussions were interesting, and the decisions made by vote showed quite good judgment. The artists loved voting on poetry but didn't think it right that literary people should vote on their sketches. Visitors were brought in, and, unless somebody objected, they were allowed to vote, too. It was a kind of show, and a good show. Brilliant speeches of criticism were sometimes made, and wit and eloquence often swayed the vote on disputed offerings. Louis Untermeyer, the poet and critic, beamed through his glasses and set off puns like bunches of firecrackers. John Sloan sometimes had to speak twice about a drawing — once for himself, and once for those tonguetied artists over in the corner who couldn't speak for themselves.

Among the visitors we sometimes had that picturesque anarchist, Hippolyte Havel, who came to laugh at these ridiculous socialist parliamentary proceedings. Voting on art! Voting on anything was a mere imposture of bourgeois democracy, according to Hippolyte. Art Young once reminded him that even anarchists decided some things by vote. "Yes," said Hippolyte proudly, "but we don't abide by our decisions."

At the conclusion of the meeting, we would have a portfolio of drawings and a briefcase half full of approved prose and poetry for the next issue. All Max Eastman and I had to do was put it together. That, at least, was what those artists thought; but East-

man and I knew better. The hodgepodge of art work and writing that had been approved at the meeting wouldn't make a magazine. It had to have some kind of unity, or balance, or something. So we went about and got new contributions; we wrote things ourselves; we received unexpected treasures in the mails. Sometimes a literary masterpiece or drawing would be taken out of a desk-drawer where it had accidentally got left. Some of the artists thought there was some shenanigan about those features which turned up at the last minute, and which were printed without having to run the gauntlet of a meeting where they might have been voted down. Max Eastman and I were literary guys, and they didn't think that literary guys could be trusted an inch.

In the office I got well acquainted with Max Eastman. He had a ringing laugh as loud and hearty as any I have ever heard, a laugh that it was a pleasure to hear and to arouse. I was already a humorist, and I practiced on Eastman. He was a fine audience. The idea that made the *Masses* what it was — a commingling of earnestness and gaiety and beauty — was his idea. And it was an idea that I temperamentally approved, being in my own life and works a compound of earnestness and frivolity. We did good editorial teamwork on that *Masses*' idea. Ours was a muckraking magazine and a comic magazine and a very arty magazine. It had a list of distinguished contributors a yard long, and, for a

small magazine, it was very widely known. There was nothing else like it in the American magazine world.

Sometimes Eastman and I had to think up cartoons on current events. We would work out in our minds a John Sloan picture or an Art Young cartoon. All that remained was to get those artists to do the drawing. But tact was required for that. I would go and visit Art Young in his studio, and he would say, in a worried tone, that he hadn't thought up an idea yet for next month's *Masses* cartoon. We would talk about current events, taking up and dropping various cartoon ideas, and I would casually introduce a suggestion of the Art Young cartoon that I had in my head. Presently I would seize Art's arm and say: "Art — that was a good cartoon idea of yours —" "What idea was that?" he would ask, and I would tell him. "Why, that's not a bad cartoon idea at all," he would say, and with a few more suggestions from me he would sketch it out in talk, and then on paper. I would leave him working away on it and go back to report success to my chief.

III

In the course of a year or two, I found out what those artists who glowered in corners were glowering about. We had done their art a grave injury, Eastman and I. We had put words under their pictures. We, of course, meant no harm; we thought that if a picture showed two frowsy girls talking together, one should be saying

something amusing to the other. We wanted the picture to have some kind of meaning. But, though we didn't realize it, that was a crime against art. The fact was that these artists were art-for-art's-sakers, even if they did have proletarian ashcans in their pictures.

And they were mad at Max Eastman and me; mad at all the literary guys who had the impudence to vote on their pictures. They lined up a number of the artists on their side — including, oddly enough, John Sloan. They even had a literary editor on their side, Robert Carlton Brown, a modernist poet. They issued a pronouncement sternly directing Eastman and me to cease and desist from our corrupt practices, to take what was given us at the meetings, and to stop pulling things out of desk-drawers at the last minute.

So Eastman and I said we would lay off our editorial labors for a month and let them get out an issue of the magazine all by themselves, to show us how it should be done. They could hardly believe we would do a thing like that to them. They went down and sat in the *Masses'* office, and waited for the truant editors to return. They went to the door and looked up and down the street — but there was no sign of us. Eastman and I were off — I can't remember where — doing other things. The art-for-art's-sakers sat in the office and played with the scissors and the paste-pot, and this went on day after day, until they gave up hope. They surrendered, and East-

man and I came cheerfully back and got out the magazine.

But the art-for-art's-sakers continued their subversive activities against the benevolent despotism of Max Eastman and me, and at a stockholders' meeting I got up and proposed that we expel the whole kit and caboodle of them. Art Young seconded my motion. But John Sloan rose and made a very fine speech, taking both sides of the question in a humorous and soothing manner, until harmony was restored.

The *Masses* was a costly magazine to print, and the printers' bills were paid by large cash contributions from rich people. In my early days on the *Masses*, when I sat with Max Eastman and pasted up the dummy, I used to wonder about this. He was the money-raiser. He got that money from rich people. How did he do it? He must be a smooth talker, I thought. And it couldn't be just his poetical good looks, for he got thousand-dollar checks from rich men as well as rich women. But, anyway, our getting money from the rich was a sort of skeleton in our proletarian revolutionary closet. It was kind of hushed up. My early socialist education had taught me about the war of the classes but not about the revolt of the Rich against the Rich.

The rich patrons of the *Masses* were reformers, liberals, progressives, or just fed up and disgusted. They did not approve of bloody murder — Colorado, West Virginia — or of the way the newspapers were hushing up these

matters. They wanted some muckraking done, and they were willing to pay to promote it.

From the point of view of some people in those days, we of the *Masses* were all eligible for jail on several grounds. We were continually thumbing our noses at Anthony Comstock and practically daring him to try to put us in jail on charges of obscenity. (We were always printing pictures of naked women.) We denounced the laws against giving out birth-control information, and openly conspired to encourage people to regard such laws with contempt and derision.

To our rich reformer friends, some of these things were mere trifles; if we wanted to go to jail for printing pictures of pretty girls with no clothes on, that was our affair — but it was not what they were handing out thousand-dollar checks for. They were serious-minded, the Rebel Rich. They wanted muckraking. And many of our readers from coast to coast felt the same way about it. "Such stories and pictures as these," they wrote in and told us, "do not advance the cause of socialism." Sometimes they wrote in even stronger terms. One of my early stories, "A Perfectly Good Cat," shocked many readers, caused cancellations of subscriptions, and was gravely deplored by Upton Sinclair, out in Pasadena, who considered that it was likely to impair the morals of American youth.

Yet as time went on I acquired a better reputation — a reputation as a very serious-minded person, indeed.

This was on account of my book-reviews in the back of the *Masses*. The more earnest side of my nature was coming out. Upton Sinclair approved of me, now. Ah, well, youth slips by. I was getting along in years, getting along towards 30.

IV

The entrance of the United States into the war against Germany precipitated a crisis in the *Masses'* affairs. We had been critical of the war from a socialist point of view, and we had also given space to criticism of war as such from a pacifist point of view. Some of our old contributors left us, new ones joined us, and we continued to criticize the war. We felt that there was something to be said about war profiteering; something to be said in defense of pacifists and conscientious objectors; and, increasingly, something to be said about the blind, blundering ferocity with which the government was undertaking to silence all minority opinion under the Espionage Act.

We did not get very far before we were indicted under the Espionage Act, ourselves; and our magazine was suppressed. I must not neglect to say that our rich reformer friends rallied to our aid and put up a lot of bail for us. The district attorney got hold of the stenographers' pot-hook records of those stormy meetings of ours in which the art-for-art's-sake artists were rowing with the literary guys. And what he made of those minutes was an E. Phillips Oppenheim con-

spiracy to overthrow the government and bring about mutiny in the armed forces.

At the trial we were treated very handsomely. We were allowed to say what we believed. Max Eastman lectured the jury for hours on socialism and they listened spellbound. The district attorney, Earl B. Barnes, said that it almost made him cry to have to ask the jury to send Art Young to prison; he paid compliments to me, too. We had most of the jury on our side, but a few held out, so the jury reported that it could not reach an agreement, and the trial was over.

It had been such a governmental fiasco that I thought the matter was to be dropped. I went, as a draftee, to the training camp at Spartanburg, South Carolina. But I had been in the Army only a couple of weeks when I was sent back to stand trial again. This time the more fanciful conspiracy charges were dropped. We had criticized the government in wartime, and that was conspiracy enough. Jack Reed, back from the war fronts, entertained the jury with accounts of his experiences as a war correspondent. Max Eastman made another long oration. But, right now, American boys were getting killed on the battlefield, the band was playing patriotic airs outside the window, and it didn't look so good for people who criticized the government. Art Young was worried about me. At some lull in the long trial, he asked: "Floyd, did you realize, when you came on the *Masses*,

what kind of company you were keeping?" "Yes," I said, "I knew you were just a lot of jailbirds. It's the kind of company I prefer to keep. I belong here, Art, the same as you do." He patted my arm. "That's all right, then," he said.

Again the jury could not agree on a verdict. The war was soon over, and after a while that indictment against the *Masses'* editors was quashed. In the meantime we had started a new magazine, the *Liberator*, which was, in a way, a continuation of the old *Masses*, with Max Eastman as editor, and with one new feature of which I heartily approved — we paid for contributions. The story of the *Masses*, I think, ends with the *Liberator*, and how the latter ended can be quickly told.

As for myself, I worked on the *Liberator* for a year or two, but, being at last happily married, I had time to finish my first novel, *Moon-Calf*. It did so well that I wrote another novel, and then quit my editorial desk, and was out in the country, getting acquainted with our first baby, when there came the news of the sad, bad Mr. Mylius.

Mr. Mylius was an Englishman who

had some kind of job in the office of the *Liberator*. He was notable for having written a pamphlet criticizing the British government's colonial methods, and he couldn't go back home. He had a pale, sorrowful visage, which seemed to be ever brooding over the wrongs of subject peoples. But it turned out that Mr. Mylius was not as high-minded a fellow as we thought. Under that altruistic and humanitarian exterior he concealed a deplorable taste for wine, woman and song. He suddenly decamped with all the money that had been raised for the support of the magazine.

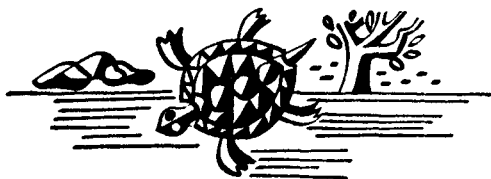
That put the *Liberator* on the rocks. Max Eastman gave it up. A younger crowd carried on with it for a while, but it didn't last long. The one remaining old *Masses* contributor, Howard Brubaker, went over to the *New Yorker*, whose pages his little "Of All Things" paragraphs still delightfully adorn.

The old days were over. And I, a literary guy out in the country writing novels, would have something more interesting to remember than some literary guys have. I wouldn't have missed it for anything.



DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE



RED-WING

DEEP inside each of us there lives an aboriginal self: a boy-self, an Adam-self, keen-eyed, keen-nosed, animally alert and responding with a hundred pristine "feelers" to the astonishing adventure of aware aliveness in this incredible world of earth and water and stretching sky. This dawn-self lives in each of us, in our individual recollected experience of youth; and it lives in us collectively as race, in a memory going back and back to when the earliest human beings first snuffed with quivering nostrils the scents on the forest air, and first started with marvel at the look of a leaf, and first abandoned weary bodies to the extraordinary benison of rest. The primal self is in us all, however deep. We are so to speak inhabited, each of us, by a primitive sleeper.

The sleeper inside most of us, it may be, sleeps very deep indeed. Our primitive responsiveness to the world is easily worn and dulled. The drudgery of work does it; pride and self-pre-occupation do it. The "noisiness of

life" brings it about that our sensory delicacies and discriminations go, and our capacity for alert responsiveness is ground down to a dull apathy, and we are not able to have our spirits set singing by the excitements of the life-experience. But deep, deep, though the primitive sleeper may be driven, and dulled into however stertorous a drowse, it lives on forever. The sleeping aboriginal self can be awakened. The earth-events of everyday perhaps cannot do it, but there are a certain few that can. A certain look of the summer sunlight slanting in late afternoon across the fields . . . a certain pun-gence of wood-smoke drifting on the October air . . . a certain scent of furrowed earth, a sound of the scream of hawks, a feel of the texture of the wind on a mountaintop . . . and suddenly, from the depths of even the most earth-alienated and unexpected of us, there is roused up with a start the long-sleeping primal self, the original self, the old Adam and the small boy, and for an instant we are touched and shaken by an obscure memory of long-ago and might-have-been.

The old self that sleeps inside us perhaps is roused to wakefulness in April more often than in any other month around the year. April is full of sounds and sights and promises that are meaningful to the old self: frog-croak, seedling-stir, the swampy smell of the beginning of things. Middle-aged men go out in April, and all of a sudden something strangely leaps awake inside them, and they are made into small boys. Matrons go out in April, and all at once they hear a bird call on the soft air, and they are in that moment turned into the girls they were forty years ago, or the women they may have been when it was forty millenniums ago. In April we are all made to know that the primal self is not withered and gone forever, but only sleeping. The reminder is brought to us most often of all, perhaps, by our hearing in some cat-tailed swamp the April voices of the kind of blackbirds called red-wings.

II

The song of red-winged blackbirds is the voice of spring marshes, rushing-ridged ponds, wet meadows where the sedge grows rank. *Conkerree! Okalee!* . . . The gurgling call rings out now in April from landscapes that smell of ooze and swamp-scum and new green growth. Only a sentimentalist could insist that red-wings' sounds are musical, in the sense in which our cultivated taste understands music. But they are musical in a wild, guttural earth-evocative way that is to the

taste, precisely, of the old, old self within. Red-wings mean the earth when it is wet and sprouting and pungent with life-stench, after the long white barrenness of winter. Red-wings mean we have lived to see another spring, and juices are rising.

Male red-wings come north before the females, as much as two or three weeks before them. It is a curious circumstance of red-wings' lives that, except in the actual time of the nesting season, the two sexes live altogether independently. The males have their flocks; the females have their flocks. In both southerly and northerly migrations the separation is maintained. Male and female red-wings are so very different in appearance — the males being a handsome glossy black, with vivid scarlet and buff shoulders, and the females being a drab kind of streaked all-over brownish — that the separation of the sexes has persuaded many countrymen to suppose that they are two different species of bird. In late March and early April, now, it is the male red-wings that are crying their *Conkerree! Okalee!* among the cat-tails.

Some of them are only resting, before proceeding further north to mate and settle. Others are choosing nesting territory, staking claim to a portion of swamp-land. These latter are the most vocal. They accompany the making of their music, which is in fact the utterance of their territorial claims, with a great bowing and bobbing, ducking and teetering. Every now and then one of them, as though

its April aliveness must burst the confines of such small gestures, mounts on furiously beating wings into the air, hovers there as long as it can maintain itself, and then plummets down to perch swaying on a cat-tail in its chosen area.

A red-wings' swamp in April is a thronged place of tumultuous aliveness. The birds come winging in to it in great flocks of characteristic formation — a long "arm" projecting at right angles to the central body of the flock, in a thin line of blackbirds that may stretch upwards of a mile — and as the multitudes settle the whole marsh becomes an uproar of their creaking music and restlessly bobbing dark bodies. Often enough there are cowbirds and starlings mingling with the red-wings, and the cries and calls of all of them mingle with the early spring voices of the frogs, and then a marsh becomes such an utterance of the drive and thrust of spring renaissance that it can be a nearly frightening thing. (Frightening, that is, to our today-selves; the old self inside, when it wakes to it, fairly licks its chops and wriggles ecstatically on its belly.)

When the female red-wings have come, and the birds have mated, it is exclusively the female that attends to nest-building. Many species of male birds assist in this performance; but the scarlet-shouldered male red-wing devotes himself only to a continuation of his outpouring of *Conkerree! Okalee!* and the warning utterance of a harsh *Cack! Cack!* when there is sighted a

possible danger. The drab female, slipping unobtrusively in and out among the reeds, weaves a nest of grass and rushes that is nearly as expert as an oriole's. It is usually placed only a few feet above the moist ground or water, and is perhaps most commonly suspended between two cat-tail stalks. There are usually three to five eggs, a lovely bluish white in color, irregularly scrawled with darker markings.

Red-wing eggs hatch quickly, normally in eleven days. As in the case of the building of the nest, here again the male takes no part. With the hatching of the young, however, he enters into fuller partnership. Young red-wings spend only ten days or so in the nest, and so rapid a maturing requires an enormous feeding. Half of this labor, at least, falls to the male bird; and from early morning until sunset both parents are engaged in stuffing their nestlings. The diet they feed is entirely insects, which means they must frequently make excursions to nearby stubble-fields and similar insect-abundant areas. Insect life in a swamp has its limits, and the populace of the nesting red-wings is likely to be so large that the swamp alone cannot provide enough to eat. From the time the baby red-wings hatch until they fly is a period of intensive activity: fetching food, keeping the hot interior of the nest clean, carrying away excreta. The situation is often made more complicated by the fact that a male red-wing may have more than one mate. Sometimes, by the time the

last females arrive in the spring, there are not enough males left to go around. When this happens, polygamy is usual. Not infrequently two females, with a single mate, may build nests simultaneously in cat-tails only a few feet apart.

When young red-wings leave the nest, their markings are those of the mother bird. The flaming shoulder-patches of the males develop only very gradually. It is usually August before they begin to become conspicuous as areas of orange. Another full year thereafter is required before the orange wholly turns to blazing scarlet. In April now, as the red-wings come wheeling down into the marshes in their thousands, it is necessary only to look at the tint of the shoulder patches to know which birds are from last year's hatch and which are veterans.

The kinds of thing that interest technical ornithologists about red-winged blackbirds are such facts as

that they belong to a bird family found only in the New World, or such features as the peculiar anatomy of their beaks (which are sharply pointed, without a notch, and with a base that runs far up on the forehead). Details like these are interesting enough, in their way. But what makes red-wings significant to most of us, and makes their spring coming a great happening in our calendar of earth-events, is hardly any such matters of factuality. What makes red-wings meaningful to us is that they wake us. Their queer, creaky, guttural music shouts through the dull envelope of our outer self, and sounds in the ear of that self which sleeps inside. *Conkerree! Okalee! Cack!* We hear the sound of it, and we smell the smell of the April marsh, and we sense frog-croak and scum-scent and black, black ooze . . . and all at once, if only for this one piercing and poignant moment, now in the April of the year, an ancient sleeper comes alive again.

SKEPTIC

BY JOHN VAN BRAKLE

So long ago when he was but a boy
He found he could derive a secret joy
Believing things that were not quite the truth;
But that was only innocence of youth.
Now sad and older and convinced he's wise
He doubts the truth that shines before his eyes,
And so he sees the world through veils of grief
For having lost the solace of belief.

HOW MOTORISTS CAN SAVE MONEY

BY HARLAND MANCHESTER

ABOUT half of America's motorists pay two cents more per gallon to fill their tanks with premium gasoline. Ask them why they stop before the "extra" pump and they'll probably say: "more pep," "better mileage," "quicker starting." The truth is that most of them get no benefit whatsoever. The American Automobile Association estimates this delusion is costing American drivers upwards of \$200 million annually.

Last year, drivers of the U. S. government motor fleets comprising 71,000 vehicles were instructed that all stock-production model passenger cars, trucks and buses then in use "have been designed for completely satisfactory operation on gasoline of anti-knock value not higher than that now found in the regular grade." Exception is made only for a small number of cars specifically designed for higher-octane fuel.¹

¹ A summary of owners manuals supplied by leading manufacturers shows that premium gasoline is recommended for the current Cadillac, and for the Oldsmobile "90"; that it "may be used" in the Buick "50" and "70"; that it is optional in the Chrysler and Packard if the engine or ignition is adjusted to take advantage of it. The Ford '49 is "designed and built to give complete satisfaction when operated on regular grades of non-premium gasoline." Plymouth, Chevrolet, Dodge, Pontiac, De Soto and Studebaker make no recommendations.

Says Prof. Frederick H. Dutcher of Columbia University's department of mechanical engineering: "If an engine will run on regular gasoline without knocking, it is foolish to buy premium. And drivers shouldn't worry about a little knock now and then. A suspicion of a knock on a hill is not a bad thing, because it indicates that conditions are fairly close to optimum."

Premium gas is no wonder-fuel loaded with magic ingredients, as many drivers seem to think. Twice a year the U. S. Bureau of Mines collects thousands of samples of gasoline from pumps all over the country. These samples are analyzed, and the results printed in a *National Motor-Gasoline Survey* available to the public. The Bureau's latest report shows that the only appreciable difference between most regular and premium gasolines is that the latter contain more tetraethyl lead, whose only function is to increase the anti-knock rating of the fuel. Some drivers have a notion that premium fuel makes their engines start and warm up more quickly. A more volatile gasoline

HARLAND MANCHESTER, whose last contribution to the *MERCURY* was "Rockets Come of Age," in the December 1943 issue, was a newspaper man for sixteen years. He was president of the Boston Newspaper Guild in 1937, at which time he began writing only for magazines.

might produce that result, but the report shows no appreciable difference in volatility between premium and regular grades. In well over 90 per cent of today's automobiles, premium fuel does no good at all and even does a little harm, for the additional amount of lead is likely to increase engine deposits. The few drivers whose cars need premium gas have been told so by their dealers or can find advice in the owner's manual.

II

American drivers are also spending a sizable sum for needless oil changes. How often should you change your oil? The oil industry, through the American Petroleum Institute, still sticks to its old slogan, "Every 1000 miles," and most filling-station operators, who make a good profit from oil, tell drivers the same thing. The legend persists partly because of an old notion that oil "breaks down" or "wears out." It doesn't — it just gets dirty and in cold weather it may get diluted. The Air Force and commercial air lines "launder" their lubricating oil and use it over again, and many experts believe that it improves with use.

Automobile manufacturers consider frequent oil changes unnecessary. Here are a few of their recommendations: Ford '48, 3500 miles or four times a year; Chevrolet '48, 2000 to 3000 miles; current Plymouth, Dodge and Chrysler, 2500 to 3000 miles in summer; 1500 to 2000 miles in winter; Oldsmobile '48, 2000 miles; Buick '48,

2000 to 3000 miles; Pontiac '48, 3000 to 4000 miles. Manufacturers advise, however, that the oil filter should be replaced or reconditioned every 5000 to 8000 miles.

There is plenty of evidence that even the motor companies are erring on the safe side. Following a recent study, the U.S. Treasury's Bureau of Federal Supply, central purchasing agent for the government, requested all departments to "change oil in the spring and in the fall or at 4000 mile intervals, whichever comes first." It adds that more frequent changes may be needed in cars which make many "stop and go" runs in cold weather or which are constantly driven in sand or dust.

The Bureau estimates that the new ruling will save 1,500,000 gallons of oil annually in government vehicles alone. If followed by everyone, it might save American motorists \$500 million a year.

Bureau experts report that "many motor vehicle fleets with well supervised maintenance operate on appreciably longer intervals ranging from 5000 miles up to semi-annual or seasonal oil changes which result in the accumulation of up to 20,000 miles of oil service." Several conservative automotive engineers have told the writer that they change oil twice a year — spring and fall. The driver of the average passenger car, whose mileage runs to about 10,000, may safely follow their advice. Provided, of course, that he heeds the maker's instructions during the break-in pe-

riod, and makes exceptions for unusual operating conditions.

He should be especially careful on the first warm days of spring, when many bearings are burned out. If he has been using his car only for short trips during cold weather, the oil in his crankcase may become diluted with gasoline by as much as 50 per cent. When he checks his oil before a 200-mile vernal jaunt, the gauge may show "full," but as the engine heats up, the

gasoline is vaporized and the oil level may become dangerously low. Millions in repair bills would be saved if drivers checked their oil every 50 miles on the first spring trips.

By using regular instead of "premium" gasoline many an American motorist can save nearly 8 per cent on his full bill; by changing oil less frequently he can save additional dollars — and help conserve the nation's oil supply.

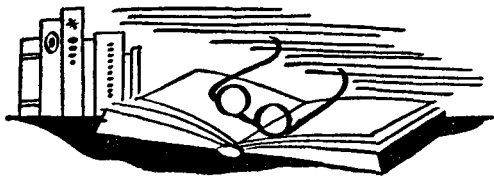
KINFOLK

BY LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS

With due respect for the proprieties,
They never missed a funeral, always came
To weddings, more concerned with Family Trees
Than some who rather lightly bore the name.
No shabbiness could ever quite conceal
The pride they kept, the loyalty they proved
In paying tribute, anxiously genteel,
Even if only cousins once removed.

After those formal gatherings where poor
Relations find enough to compensate
For being otherwise a bit obscure,
The liveried chauffeur drove them home in state,
Their gloved hands folded, counting off the years
Between felicitations, flowers and tears.

THE LIBRARY



WHAT NEXT IN CHINA?

by **BERTRAM D. WOLFE**

"On the international scale," William Z. Foster told the Politburo of the American Communist Party in 1945, "the key task is to stop American intervention in China. . . . The war in China is the key to all problems on the international front. . . ." (*Daily Worker*, Dec. 2, 1945.)

MR. FOSTER had not thought that up by himself. The order had gone out to all the Communist Parties of the world to stop United States aid to the government and people of China. Substantially the same point of view was advocated by many other people. In our State Department, John Carter Vincent, Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, was publicly urging that "neither private nor public capital" should aid China in its civil-war and invasion-bred miseries, because it was "unsound to invest . . . where a government is wasting its substance on excessive armament, where the threat or fact of civil war

exists. . . ." (Address to the National Foreign Trade Council.) When General Marshall, unversed in Oriental affairs, set out to visit our harassed Chinese ally, Mr. Vincent was the most experienced and determined member of the subcommittee which helped draft the directives to guide our emissary. The main object of those directives was to force Chiang Kai-shek into a suicidal coalition government with the Communists.

Having watched the fate of coalition in Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, by now ex-Secretary Marshall knows how false those directives were. Yet, following those evil instructions and trying to save face (not Chinese face this time, to be sure, but Marshall's own), our State Department clamped down a boycott on Chinese aid from 1946 to 1948. For two years, while the Soviet Union was providing strategic and tactical direction, was turning over Japanese equipment to the Chinese Communists, was creating a powerful armed Communist force

BERTRAM D. WOLFE, who has contributed regularly to the *MERCURY* in recent years, is the author of the recently published *Three Who Made a Revolution: Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin*.

in Manchuria where previously there had been no Communist movement — not a cartridge was going from us to China, not even to service the equipment which we had delivered during the war with Japan. The Russians stripped the large Japanese arsenal machinery from Mukden and set it up in Khabarovsk, where it has continued to go full blast manufacturing new “Japanese” artillery, large and small arms and munitions to equip an ever greater conscript Chinese Red Army. Our first trickle of counterbalancing supplies did not reach Tsingtao until November 13, 1948, when the war-weary Chinese government forces were already cracking under the strain of a fresh onslaught by freshly created and freshly armed troops.

Now there is self-questioning and chilling fear in Washington, and in the hearts of all thoughtful Americans. A third world war has been moved immeasurably closer. The unexpected folly and treachery of our policy, and the unexpected sweep and speed of its own victories, is shoving the Kremlin, half fearful, half hopeful, into new adventures. It has not the resources for reconstructing bleeding, broken China into a modern totalitarian State. But it is speculating on linking up the manpower of China (its population of 450,000,000 is more than that of all Europe, plus America, plus the Soviet Union put together!) with the political-police-military know-how of Soviet Russia. If it does not mind the spread of famine in China, it can con-

script countless millions for military purposes or, like the war prisoners, for forced labor. Its rear thus “secured” and its war potential enormously increased, there is danger that the men in the Kremlin will now ask themselves whether a single mighty shove to the Atlantic Coast by Russia’s Western armies will not suffice to add the huge industrial potential of Western Europe for “the final conflict.”

II

At this moment of soul-searching, a fine book has appeared to aid the American people in taking stock. It is *China: The Land and the People*, by Gerald F. Winfield [\$5.00, Sloane]. It is not a political book. It was sixteen years in the making, thirteen of which (1932–45) were spent in research on health in China. Underlying the struggles for political modernization (democracy or totalitarianism), and for technological modernization (the shift from hand industry and agriculture and hand irrigation to mechanization), it rightly perceives the deeper struggle against hunger and death, in a land which has the greatest population, the second highest birth rate and the highest death rate in the world. Three quarters of those who die, die without ever having seen a physician. One quarter of all deaths are due to fecal-borne diseases. From 1937–45 the war killed an estimated 5 to 10 million but fecal-borne diseases alone killed 35 million. “Seventy-five per cent of all deaths

in China are due to preventable diseases, that are under control in the West."

Dr. Winfield reminds us that during the American Revolution our own death rate, despite the free soil of America, was about what China's is now, and that London installed its first sewer little more than a century ago. But it is not the lack of sewage disposal alone, so much as the need of every drop of human and animal urine and feces for soil fertilization. The Chinese dare not for a moment relax this method of fertilization without having an alternative method ready. More than 80 per cent of this population is so close to the soil, and the whole land is so dependent upon this type of agriculture, that they dare not pause to look up from the earth over which their backs are bent in such patient, meticulous labor. They dare not straighten up to see beyond their families and their bit of ground, to the fate of China as a whole — to see whether they have an Emperor or President, a Japanese government or Chinese, would-be democratic tutelage or would-be totalitarian, government striving for independence and territorial integrity or puppet government acquiescing in partition and seeking to subordinate China to the will of a power-hungry foreign government. That is what has made it so difficult for Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, and their national people's party, the Kuomintang, to awaken in this ancient people a sense of concern for the fate of their nation. That is

the meaning of the first of Dr. Sun's famous Three Principles: Nationalism.

Approximately 1500 persons live on every square mile of arable land in China, as against 53 to the square mile in the United States. The increasing pressure of population through the decade of centuries in which this land has maintained a continuous culture (its civilization is the oldest extant!), has taught the Chinese how to use every bit of land, how to terrace every hill, how to direct every rivulet and tap every underground stream, how to conserve and use every bit of moisture, every stalk and blade of grass, every drop of urine or feces. This is the greatest pre-industrial culture in the world. With a capacity for hard, skillful and patient work that has no equal, this nation of farmers puts in 26 man-days an acre to our 1.2, but by that patient, man-power, back-breaking toil, they actually produce more wheat per acre and more rice per acre than we do with all our tools and machines and selected stocks.

Only if these labors can be unceasingly maintained while foreign invaders are driven off and foreign puppets overthrown, can the resources of China be devoted to the difficult, long-term tasks of re-education, reconstruction, and technological modernization — the program summed up in the second of Dr. Sun's Three Principles: People's Livelihood. And only if national independence and popular well-being are thus assured, can China really move towards the realization of the Third Principle: Democracy.

III

The major misconception that has been thrust upon the vulnerable reader of misleading books on China (there has been a planned flood of such books), is the notion that all China really needs is a "division of its large estates" and a "redistribution of the land." As a corollary to this fraudulent thesis, the Chinese Communists have been pictured not as power-hungry puppets of a power-hungry police State, but as a mere "agrarian reformers" fighting "feudalism." How easy it is for the mentally lazy to swallow this myth, and to think of this so different land, and this so different pattern of revolution, in the familiar terms of European revolution against feudalism!

In my article on "China's Fate" (AMERICAN MERCURY, January 1947), I wrote:

Not large estates, but little pocket-handkerchief farms too small to sustain a population which is denser in many rural areas than in the thickly populated cities of other lands — that is the basic agrarian problem of China.

This is confirmed by Dr. Winfield, as it is by every objective and honest study that has concerned itself with land distribution in China and the fate of the Chinese people. "The average farm size for the entire country," writes Dr. Winfield, "is 4.18 acres." Less than five acres! Compare this with our own average of 157 acres per farm.

What, then, about the "great feudal

landlords"? Dr. Winfield quotes from John L. Buck's scholarly study of *Land Utilization in China*. What Dr. Buck in his survey calls "very large farms" average only thirteen acres! For American farming these, too, would be dwarfs. They yield twice as much per acre as the small farms, but both Winfield and Buck find that even they are too small for proper farming. Before China can be quit of hunger and malnutrition, she must move at least 180 million of her people (more than the entire population of the United States) from farms to cities. She must develop new industries for them. She must extend the size of each individual, family farm, including the "average very large farm." She must build a network of roads and railroads; set up one or more huge power dams for mechanized irrigation and hydroelectric power in the gorges of the Yangtze and other rivers. These are needed to substitute electric power for arm and shoulder and back, and for new industries, and above all, to provide airfixed nitrates as fertilizers to take the place of fecal matter. For this, Dr. Winfield calculates that China needs not less than 20 million tons of chemical fertilizer per year. The total world production of chemical fertilizer in 1946-47 amounted to only 24 million tons! Still, a modern hydroelectric dam system on the Yangtze would go far to provide this nitrate lack. Thus the whole basic program for the reconstruction of China is carefully worked out in Dr. Winfield's book,

for President Truman and Secretary Acheson to see if they really mean to implement the Fourth Point in the President's Inaugural Address.

IV

Dr. Winfield is not a politically sophisticated person, and the political observations in his book come as mere side remarks. Yet they serve to clear the fog that has deliberately been spread between the American people and China, and to render the reader immune to the effects of the greatest piece of Soviet psychological warfare so far perpetrated.

"The land issue," writes Dr. Winfield in one of his characteristic political *obiter dicta*, "has been skilfully used to confuse American thinking about China. . . . Out of this uncritical writing and fallacious thinking comes confusion as to what American policy should be in the present complex situation . . . and resistance to doing anything at all."

That, in a nutshell, is precisely the purpose of the psychological warfare. When William Z. Foster pronounced the "end of American intervention in China the key task on which our Party must use every ounce of its strength and skill and organizational ability," that was what he was driving at. When John Carter Vincent urged that no "capital, public or private," be invested to help the Chinese government, his words had the same effect. When Shanghai businessmen who did business with the Japanese and believe they can do business with

the Communists, urge that we switch from aiding the Central Government to aiding the Soviet puppet régime, and this finds an immediate echo in the words and writings of "old China hands," the proposal is to move from "non-intervention" to the giving of aid to totalitarianism in China. And there are not lacking big American oil companies with branches in Shanghai to second the proposal, thereby evincing a strange concurrence of an unconscious death wish with a conscious desire to continue for a few more years to turn a quick profit. Thus do "Freud and Marx" make an incredible combination!

Dr. Winfield is no partisan of the Central Government against the Communists, or of the Communists against the Central Government. In one of his political side remarks he rightly points out that both were trained in Moscow: Chiang Kai-shek having studied there as well as Mao Tse-tung, Li Li-san, and Chou En-lai. The only difference, the significance of which escapes Dr. Winfield, is that Chiang broke with Moscow in 1927, when Stalin had not yet succeeded in setting up his one-man dictatorship, and the Russian State had not yet perfected its totalitarian setup complete with blood purges, slave labor, concentration camps and police dictatorship over the Party. On the other hand, the Mao Tse-tungs, Chou En-lais and Li Li-sans are men hand-picked by Stalin and trained to admire and serve the full-blown totalitarian State of the Stalinist era. What Chiang

gradually rejected in the course of his break and gradually modified under the influence of Sun Yat-sen's original doctrine and the counsel of American advisers, the Communists accept, glorify, and regard as the ideal they serve and strive to realize.

"The world hears little about the Communist secret police in China," Dr. Winfield observes in another side remark, "for the same reason that it hears little about it in Yugoslavia and Russia. [While his book was on the press, however, we suddenly heard a lot about Tito's secret police because the Cominform and the Kremlin chose to publicize it!] More is heard about the Kuomintang secret police because, in spite of all said and written to the contrary, the Central Government of China still permits more foreign correspondents to see and write more about it than do the Communists."

Other side remarks deal with that favorite weapon of psychological warfare, the claim of the Communists that they are "people's democracies" and that those they attack are "fascists":

Although the Central Government is not democratic, it is also not fascist. Both Kuomintang party and Central Government are clearly on record as moving towards democracy. By drafting and promulgating the constitution, and by holding the first national elections, they have taken important steps towards setting up that democracy, even in the midst of a continuing war situation.

And, since these lines were written,

the Communists have made the abrogation of that constitution one of their "eight peace demands."

Another casual side remark which will astonish American victims of Soviet psychological warfare deals with the question of China's centuries-old tradition of a rake-off or commission by poorly paid government officials on all government deals. Like everything else in this ancient land, this has been changing slowly, but the government has actually made great strides toward changing it:

Although a great majority of the officials of the Central Government are honest men who carry on their work against constantly mounting financial difficulties, the small, corrupt minority are spotlighted and, by implication, destroy the reputation of the honest majority.

Still more startling to the average reader will come the news reported by Dr. Winfield, after wandering over much of the land, that "the Kuomintang, in spite of inflation, is accomplishing much in the fields of education, agriculture and public health to help the common people." His accounts of the reform of the ancient printed and written language, of the spread of education and literacy even during the period of flight from the Japanese invader, of the actual increase of schools in wartime, of the pitiful attempts to tackle with broken resources and a war-exhausted people all the colossal tasks of reconstruction which would tax the richest and most peaceful nation — these are all moving things, even though they too are

but marginal notes to his central story. Even this reviewer was surprised to learn that whereas the number of Russian schools and the level of education contracted drastically during the German invasion, the number of Chinese schools was actually increased, though the level of instruction sank, during the much longer and farther-reaching Japanese invasion of China.

v

In one regard, Dr. Winfield's book is already out of date. "China," he writes,

has apparently passed beyond the danger of being reduced to colonial status by other powers, and is free to develop her resources for the benefit of her own citizens. . . . The greatest achievement of World War II was the abrogation of the unequal treaties. . . . A ruthless struggle for power is being fought by two groups, neither of which is capable of a quick or decisive victory. . . . In spite of the immediate difficulties, the long-term prospects of working out a basis for effective operation (for American aid) seem to be good, provided the country does not become Communist, or break up into a number of more or less independent regions.

But, alas, at the very moment when Dr. Winfield was rejoicing at the freeing of China from her colonial status, our late President was bribing Stalin to enter a war with Japan which he had better been kept out of. The bribe was that which was not ours to give, the right to occupy northern Korea, to seize Port Arthur and Dairen, to occupy Manchuria. It was this

great outflanking operation which made it inevitable that the Central Government should lose the whole of North China. China is once more being partitioned, broken up into fragments, reduced to colonial status. If the reader doubt that, let him remember that the Chinese Communists, under Stalin's orders, have endorsed the Russian annexation of Mongolia, the imperialist penetration of Sinkiang, the stripping of China's only center of heavy industry, Manchuria, the seizure of Port Arthur and Dairen, the new extraterritorial, imperialist treaties. When Stalin needed it in 1941 for his pact with Japan, the Chinese Communists even endorsed Japan's annexation of Manchuria!

What next? Here, Dr. Winfield, having unjustifiably underestimated the tempo of events, has no answers. Yet the underlying picture he painted is there to guide us. Still, as when he wrote, there are only two viable forces in China, and no "third force" can be plucked like a rabbit out of a silk or brass hat. Though the Kuomintang is now much weaker and the Communists much stronger, both will continue with their rival programs. The program of the Kuomintang remains, as in the past, the only force for the defense of the territorial integrity and independence, and for the eventual democratization and reconstruction of China. The program of the Communist Party remains, as in the past, a program for Russian penetration, Russian partition, for the tying of China to a world drive for

power, for the ultimate introduction of a police-state totalitarianism. Unlike America, Russia has not the resources to reconstruct China, but can only use China as a mighty force in its bid for world power. It can use China, as it is using the countries behind the iron curtain, to bolster its own economy, and, since China is too poor to yield much in materials or machines (Manchuria having already been stripped), Russia will use it chiefly as a source of man-power, for forced labor and for future armies.

Yet I cannot believe that China's struggle for territorial integrity and independence is at an end. Thrice did Sun Yat-sen resign or flee his land, but he never gave up. This is the third time that Chiang Kai-shek has done the same. Yet the Kuomintang, under his leadership, as seems most likely, or under whatever leadership, will retain some areas and will continue their struggle. Wherever, in South China, or in Western China, or in Formosa, or in exile, a center of resistance forms which continues the

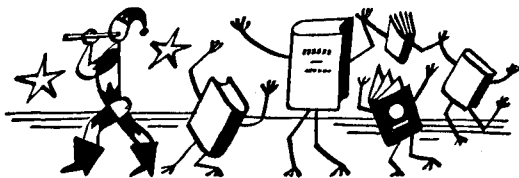
fight for the three principles of Sun Yat-sen, to them should go the support of men and governments who believe in China's right to independence, to territorial integrity, to freedom from unequal treaties and foreign domination. We in America, though we claimed no extraterritorial privileges for ourselves, have the deepest moral responsibility for bringing the Kremlin's forces into Port Arthur, Dairen, Manchuria and Northern Korea. In the subsequent boycott of the Central Government when it most needed our aid and had the greatest right to claim it, we must now see the greatest victory ever won by Soviet psychological warfare. Here, in China, the tide must be turned if we wish to stop the spread of totalitarianism and aggressive imperialism, and if we wish to delay, and if possible prevent, the outbreak of yet another world war, in which the captive masses of Asia are joined to the captive masses of Europe in a "final" effort to overwhelm what is left of the non-totalitarian and democratic world.

PHRASE ORIGINS—47

TO HAVE AN AXE TO GRIND: *This phrase is believed to have originated with Benjamin Franklin. On one occasion, when he was a boy, Franklin permitted a total stranger to wheedle him through flattery into turning his grindstone so that he could sharpen his axe. The job completed, young Franklin's only reward for an hour's labor was a brusque order to be off. Ever after, he relates in his autobiography, whenever someone approached him with honeyed words, he recalled this boyhood incident and wondered whether the person in question might not also have an axe to grind.*

LOUIS JAY HERMAN

THE CHECK LIST



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

THE LAW OF LOVE AND THE LAW OF VIOLENCE, by Leo Tolstoy. \$3.00. *Field*. This book by the Russian novelist has never been published in Russia. It was translated from the original manuscript, into French, by M. Halperine-Kaminsky, and it now appears in English for the first time, in a translation from the French by Mary Koutouzow Tolstoy. Devotees of Tolstoy's works will be glad to have this hitherto unknown work by the master, but they will not find anything that they had not known previously. He pleads against violence of all kinds and he calls upon the world to practice the basic principle of genuine Christianity, namely, brotherly love. He has only sharp things to say about "false Christianity, represented by the Church, whose principles differ from those of paganism only by a lack of sincerity."

ROAD TO SURVIVAL, by William Vogt. \$4.00. *Sloane*. The thesis of Mr. Vogt, who is chief of the Conservation Section of the Pan-American Union, is a simple and startling one, to wit, that "By excessive breeding and abuse of the land mankind has backfired itself into an ecological trap. By a lopsided use of applied science it has been living on promissory notes. Now, all over the world, the notes are falling due." He backs up this thesis with ample facts and figures. He warns that we better "stop blaming economic systems, the weather, bad luck, or callous saints" for the world's troubles, and begin doing the only two things that will save

mankind: "the control of populations and the restoration of resources." Otherwise "we may as well give up all hope of continuing civilized life. Like Gadarene swine, we shall rush down a war-torn slope to a barbarian existence in the blackened rubble." There is an introduction by Bernard M. Baruch.

ACTIONS AND PASSIONS, *Notes on the Multiple Revolution of Our Time*, by Max Lerner. \$3.50. *Simon & Schuster*. Another big batch of Mr. Lerner's essays and editorials from the now defunct newspaper *PM*. Like *Public Journal*, a similar collection of the author's which appeared four years ago, this volume will be mainly of interest for its proof of the ephemerality of day-to-day journalistic philosophizing. Mr. Lerner retains his rare facility with the language, his gift for characterization, and his ability to clothe the simple and often dubious ideas in high-sounding rhetoric. But his speculations on such half-forgotten matters of a year ago as the Bennett Meyers case and Eisenhower's Presidential ambitions seem to be largely irrelevant to anything that is going on in the world today.

HISTORY

CRUSADE IN EUROPE, *A Personal Account of World War II*, by Dwight D. Eisenhower. \$5.00. *Doubleday*. Naturally, this is not Eisenhower's complete story of World War II, nor a very large part of it, but it is certainly a fair sampling of his thinking about it and it presents in outline the major operations in the European theatre. He

takes in all the important personalities and battles, and his desire to be fair is apparent on every page, as is his basic humanity, revealed in his dealings with the common soldier. There are some minor revelations, as when he says that on one occasion in Europe President Truman said to him: "General, there is nothing that you may want that I won't try to help you get. That definitely and specifically includes the Presidency in 1948." But by and large there is really not very much here that is new or especially penetrating as to world affairs, including military. The general seems to think that there is some way in which we can get along with Russia, though he is very vague on the whole matter, and he is vigorously for the United Nations, for only in such an organization is there a "true, long-term assurance that democracy may flourish in the world." There is no awareness in the book of the grave limitations and glaring failures of the UN. Future historians doubtless will refer to this volume, but it doesn't seem likely that they will find very much in it that will help them unravel the many puzzles surrounding World War II. There are numerous photographs and maps.

THE BATTLE FOR NORTH AMERICA, edited by John Tebbel. \$7.50. *Doubleday*. Mr. Tebbel has done nothing less than condense Francis Parkman's classic thirteen-volume *France and England in North America* within the space of fewer than 750 pages. His editing is first-rate. He has put all American students who are not specialists in history in his debt. Indeed, there is now no reason why the intelligent layman should not enjoy reading the masterwork of the greatest historical genius that this country has yet produced.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

STALIN & CO., *The Politburo — the Men Who Rule Russia*, by Walter Duranty. \$3.00. *Sloane*. Sketches of the fourteen leaders of the USSR (including A. A. Zhdanov, who died last year but was included anyway),

with a number of lengthy digressions into Soviet history and foreign policy. Mr. Duranty has apparently not come around to changing any of his early opinions about the USSR: he retains a sneaking admiration for Stalin, whose authority, he argues convincingly, is unimpaired; still believes that the régime commands the loyalty and even affection of most of its subjects; and still feels optimistic about the future of Soviet-American relations. Stalin's personal dictatorship is explained by Mr. Duranty largely in terms of the ingrained Russian tendency to leadership; but he predicts, somewhat inconsistently, that when Stalin dies the Politburo as a whole, rather than any one man, will rule the nation.

MEMOIRS OF ALFRED ROSENBERG, with analytical commentary by Serge Lang and Ernst von Schenck. \$4.00. *Ziff-Davis*. These memoirs, written in a cell at Nuremberg, make it plain that Alfred Rosenberg was a good deal less than the philosopher he was once widely advertised to be; the general impression one gets is of a well-educated crank. Like most of the other leading Nazis, Rosenberg was apparently up to his ears in party intrigue; and his hatred of Goebbels, Himmler and Bormann, who he felt were perverting the "ideals" of Nazism, was boundless. He regarded Hitler as a great man, of course, though as an intellectual he had his reservations. ("Hitler had, as far as painting was concerned, strictly lower-middle-class taste.") The commentary by Messrs. Lang and von Schenck is restrained and to the point. A fascinating document.

BIOGRAPHY

HENRY DAVID THOREAU, by Joseph Wood Krutch. \$3.50. *Sloane*. This is a sound study of Thoreau as a person, stylist, poet, essayist, and social thinker. For its information it leans heavily upon its predecessors, chiefly, it would seem, upon the lives by Henry Seidel Canby and F. B. Sanborn. Dr. Krutch offers nothing in the way of new facts, and, unfortunately, nothing especially

fresh in the way of criticism. In short, he has done little more than a workmanlike rewrite job — in his usual clear but somewhat stodgy manner. It is difficult to see to whom the book will appeal. One good thing about it is the large number of quotations from Thoreau's writings. The book is the first in the American Men of Letters Series.

THOMAS: ROCK OF CHICKAMAUGA, by Richard O'Connor. \$4.00. *Prentice-Hall*. **ROCK OF CHICKAMAUGA: THE LIFE OF GENERAL GEORGE H. THOMAS**, by Freeman Cleaves. \$3.75. *Oklahoma*. General Thomas was one of the truly great military leaders on the Union side in the Civil War, yet until the appearance of these two biographies no really adequate study of him had been made. A Southerner, he was reviled by his former neighbors and considered dead even by his own kin. During the war he achieved one great victory after another, but somehow the credit generally went to others. Yet General Hooker, a keen judge of military men, called Thomas "the most gifted soldier this country ever produced, and the best man in all respects it has ever been my fortune to know." Both books have solid merits and are worthy additions to the literature of the Civil War, but Mr. O'Connor's seems to be the more thorough, and it is easily the better written.

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, SCIENTIST AND MYSTIC, by Signe Toksvig. \$5.00. *Yale*. Though he is chiefly known today as a pioneer in psychical research and as the fountain-head of a religious cult, Swedenborg was also an eminent anatomist, mathematician, philosopher and physicist. He was, indeed, one of the greatest geniuses of all time, a man of encyclopedic mind and vast profundity, whose influence upon world thought has been very great. In our own country, as is well known, Emerson had a large respect for him. Miss Toksvig (Mrs. Francis Hackett in private life) has done an objective, thorough and highly readable study of him. She seems to be sympathetic to Swedenborg's mystical notions, but that

does not interfere with her objectivity. All in all, an excellent job.

THE TIGER OF FRANCE, *Conversations with Clemenceau*, by Wythe Williams. \$4.50. *Duell, Sloan & Pearce*. An unqualified eulogy of Clemenceau by a former New York *Times* correspondent who knew his subject intimately and got much of his material straight from the horse's — or tiger's — mouth. A good deal of the story makes fascinating reading, especially the behind-the-scenes versions of the War and Versailles. But the hero of the book is a bit too prescient and infallible; he is made out to have been a universal mind who did everything well and — the textbook version to the contrary — never had a vindictive moment in his life. The "tiger" image becomes rather irritating after a time. Mr. Williams' Clemenceau goes through life clawing, growling, and "glid[ing]" with the speed of the jungle beast."

THE SCIENCES

TAKE OFF YOUR MASK, by Ludwig Eidelberg, M.D. \$3.25. *International Universities*. **LISTENING WITH THE THIRD EAR**, by Theodor Reik. \$6.00. *Farrar, Straus*. Both of these books are attempts by practicing psychoanalysts to give the reader an insight into the analytic process from the analyst's point of view. Dr. Eidelberg's work, although much less ambitious in scope than Dr. Reik's, seems to achieve greater success. It takes us through a psychoanalytic day, describing the patients who call at the office, with a brief case history of each of them. Dr. Eidelberg takes the reader into his confidence and describes, as objectively as he can, the analyst's reactions to what each patient has revealed during the session, and the process by which the material is interpreted. Because of its narrative and case-history approach, *Take Off Your Mask* does not present a continuous, well-integrated theory of psychoanalysis; nevertheless, it will give readers a good deal of insight into what takes place. Dr. Reik's book is on a larger scale. The author, who is a lay

analyst (*i.e.*, not an M.D.), takes the reader through an analyst's self-analysis, and during the course of this exploration presents a fairly unified theory. According to Dr. Reik, psychoanalysis is primarily an approach to psychology rather than a therapeutic technique — though both he and Freud have utilized the theory for obtaining cures. The keynote of the book, however, seems to be that the psychoanalytic process, far from being scientific, is a highly mystical one. The analyst's insights, according to Dr. Reik, are intuitive rather than intellectual or reasonable. Despite this rather startling pronouncement, which conflicts head-on with various statements of Freud, *Listening with the Third Ear* is a valuable contribution to the literature of psychoanalysis.

FICTION

THE HOUR OF TRUTH, by David Davidson. \$3.00. *Random House*. The quest of the disillusioned and lost man to rediscover his values and to renew his courage is the theme of David Davidson's new novel. The lost man, in this case, is William Harmon, who, thoroughly submerged by the tide of a spurious modern existence, turns to an undeveloped civilization for surcease. He becomes a key man in a mission supposedly for the purpose of relieving the poverty and ignorance of a mythical South American province. The mission, as he bitterly discovers, is made up of second-rate men, who can only feel whole by setting themselves against the weak and the submissive. Harmon finds his hour of truth by defying the traditional "white man's burden" hypothesis and by aligning himself with humanity, which he had found impracticable in the temperate zone. Mr. Davidson's intentions are good, but his novel seldom attains the level of his purpose. A disappointing performance.

NOBODY'S FOOL, by Charles Yale Harrison. \$3.00. *Holt*. What *The Hucksters* did to advertising this novel does to public relations. The story concerns the successful

firm of Jefferson Clarke Associates, whose head conceives the fantastic idea of learning the reactions of the country, and thus anticipating its attitudes for his customers, by finding and testing an average man. The expertly publicized scheme gets out of control when the "Common Man" becomes a national figure and is taken up by a group of fascists. Despite its consideration of several vital problems — racism and Communism are touched on as well as fascism — the novel fails to rise above the level of gossip shop talk about one business.

THE FAMILY MEMBERS, by Martin Yoseloff. \$2.75. *Dutton*. The locale of Mr. Yoseloff's new novel is the imaginary Rock City, Iowa, which is in the grip of the tyranny of do-gooders, gossip-mongers, the fussy leaders of the local YMCA, and the overly pious elders of the Lutheran Church. A child is born out of wedlock, and all these messy people are thrown into a dither, but the proper marriage of the two "offending parties" restores the town to its former smugness. Not a very original story, to be sure, but handled with great sympathy, understanding and tenderness, and in a style that is distinguished by economy and gracefulness. A worthy successor to Mr. Yoseloff's charming *No Greener Meadows*.

BIG JIM TURNER, by James Stevens. \$3.00. *Doubleday*. Told in the first person, this is the story of James Birney Turner, who loved horses and had a passion for the writing of poetry, and who took part in the labor struggles of the Northwest about forty years ago. The many admirers of Mr. Stevens' memorable *Black Duck Dinner and Horses*, to mention only two of his excellent pieces which originally appeared in these pages, will find all of his magic here — all his superb feeling for vast scenes and violent men, sunsets and long, sun-drenched hair. Mr. Stevens here reveals fully a tenderness that may have escaped some of his readers hitherto. The love scenes between Big Jim and Bess are very moving. Altogether, a fine novel, perhaps Mr. Stevens' best book.

THE OPEN FORUM



FIRST THINGS FIRST

SIR: In these crucial times, when we need to put first things first, and concern ourselves with the important problems of the day, it seems rather trivial that Alan Devoe [see "Jesus and Little Lord Fauntleroy," in the November *MERCURY*] should make an issue of how Jesus looked and dressed. After all, it is character, not looks, that counts. . . .

HELEN VAUGHN IVES

Cleveland, O.

WOMEN IN BONDAGE

SIR: I read with great interest the article in the January *MERCURY* by Edith M. Stern entitled "Women Are Household Slaves." . . . The successful continuance of this "comfortable setup for the male" is rooted not only in the need of the lord-and-master of the household, but equally in the unrecognized need of the mistreated female for this very dominance. The only hope for a free and equal basis for the relationship inside the home is the psychological emancipation of the female who, having once tasted the feeling of freedom, really wants to accept it and the responsibility that goes with it. . . .

GERTRUDE KAYE KISHNER

Los Angeles, Cal.

SIR: The article . . . by Edith M. Stern struck a responsive note of approval from me.

Several years ago, I wrote numerous small articles protesting the lowly state of women.

All I ever got from those masochists, the housewives, was a slap in the face for my heresy.

You are wasting your valuable time exploring women's pitiable position in the social scheme. Most of us are housewives because it is easier to follow the line of least resistance and because of our puerile inability to throw off the yoke of the feeling of inferiority to men. Once we get entrapped, a sort of dogged pride makes us rationalize about the desirability of our self-inflicted and self-enforced slavery. . . .

EUNICE B. WOOD, R.N.

Portales, N. M.

NEW YORK CITY'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SIR: In the December issue of the *MERCURY* an article ["Somebody Hold My Coat," by Billy Rose] repeats many charges about the New York City schools that have been officially denied both to the Public Education Association and to Mr. Rose after he first made the statements in his column. . . . As it is very costly to have a city misrepresented to a national audience I am again bringing attention to some inaccuracies in the article.

(1) Mr. Rose reports that there are 287 schools in New York City that are "fire traps." No schools in New York City are fire traps according to the official reports of our Fire Department. There are two categories of school buildings: the one called "fireproof" because of steel girders under the floors; the other "fire resistant" because of the absence

of such girders. The standard of safety in the school buildings of New York City is, in every case, superior to the minimum standards of the Building Department for the homes of the children of the city.

(2) The instance of the school that was used as a former police station has been a classic for some time. But P. S. 125 has been abandoned for nearly two years, and its pupils are now using the fine Lincoln School building. The bars on the windows were on cellar windows in a part of the building unused by the pupils at any time. With regard to the statement that the building was unsafe, it should be noted that on January 5, 1949, the Director of Real Estate requested the surrender of this building to the Police Department so that it may be used again as a police station.

(3) P. S. 86 in Manhattan has a seating capacity of 1112, not (as Mr. Rose says) 2059. The register on November 1, 1948 was 1007. New toilets have been installed on the main and third floors of this building and the outside toilets described by Mr. Rose have been demolished. All these changes are more than a year old. . . .

(4) I have not been able to identify the school that is charged with having only "one faucet for 600 kids." If Mr. Rose will identify the school, I will be glad to give you a report on it. . . .

I am sending this letter with the knowledge that any retraction or correction in connection with the article will never be as effective as were the original charges.

WILLIAM JANSEN

Superintendent of Schools

New York City

SIR: With the sentiments expressed by Mr. Rose I find myself in full agreement. With one "fact" I must take issue. It is a minor issue, to be sure, but it disturbs me.

Mr. Rose describes P. S. 86, the school which I had the privilege and pleasure of attending not too long ago, as being, in effect, dilapidated and ancient. I infer that Mr. Rose considers it quite unfit for anyone. If you ever pay a visit to P. S. 86 you will

see how mistaken Mr. Rose is. Far from being old and broken-down, it is comparatively modern, quite comfortable, and conducive to excellent education. . . .

GIDEON CASHMORE

New York City

VOICE-TEACHING

SIR: I want to congratulate you on the article in the January issue entitled "The Voice-Teaching Racket" [by R. G. McDodd]. It is all true and there is much more. I wish there was some way that the article could be circulated among voice students in the U. S. The situation that exists in voice-teaching amounts to criminal robbery; it is harmful to health and morale. Congratulations. . . .

EVA GAUTHIER

New York City

PILATE AND THE JEWS

SIR: I am constrained to express vigorous protest against the observation of Mr. Bergen Evans regarding Pontius Pilate in the December AMERICAN MERCURY. [See "The Skeptics' Corner."]

It was very painful for my colleagues and myself to read the following sentence in that article: "It is true that with weary cynicism, under the threat of being accused of treason himself, he [Pilate] allowed the Jews their morbid privilege."

The libelous implications of that statement are an affront to the Jewish people, and it seems incredible to me that the MERCURY would permit itself to become a vehicle for the dissemination of such libel.

Mr. Evans has erred grievously in lending the power of his pen to a canard which has brought so much unhappiness to so many people through the ages.

A. ALAN STEINBACH

Pres., B'klyn Board of Rabbis

Brooklyn, N. Y.

SIR: In tracing the legend of Pontius Pilate I intended to state merely the Gospel

Truth. I certainly did not intend to state the Historical Truth.

The facts as I gave them are to be found in Matt. 27, Mark 15, Luke 23 and John 18-20. In few things are the evangelists in so complete agreement, and the parts of their narrative to which I alluded are not questioned by Frazer and many other scholars who could by no stretch of the imagination be regarded as Christian apologists. It may be that the whole thing is, as Rabbi Steinbach alleges, a canard, a lie, a libel, a deliberate and malicious hoax; and I would be very happy to publish any conclusive evidence to that effect that he can furnish.

"Morbidity" is my own evaluation, and subject to revision under correction.

Some of my friends tell me that their lives were made wretched as children by being charged with the murder of Christ. I gather that Rabbi Steinbach feels that I have lent support to such ruffianism. In so far as I may have done so, I am aghast and penitent. I would no more think of holding present-day Jews responsible for the crucifixion of Christ — assuming that He was crucified — than I would hold them responsible for passing the children of Ammon under the harrow or slaughtering the Hivites while they were yet sore, or that I would hold present-day Frenchmen responsible for St. Bartholomew or Englishmen for Drogheda. Mankind has a dreadful past, and its only hope is that the members of each generation have a chance to disassociate themselves from the cruel and stupid beliefs of their fathers and stand on their feet as men, not members of this or that sect or nation.

BERGEN EVANS

Evanston, Ill.

PACIFISM AND WORLD SURVIVAL

SIR: My sincere congratulations to Dr. George W. Hartmann for his exposition in the February *MERCURY* of the pacifist philosophy. [See "Pacifism and Democracy."] He succinctly states methods and objectives that must be adopted by society if it is ever

to escape from the self-exploitive system of militarism and warfare. Only the most unimaginative can argue that warfare offers the slightest compensation to the society in exchange for the potential and existent human values lost. Gains realized from military adventure accrue to the few at the expense of the many. And where is the gain for those who perish? . . .

JOHN E. WELLS

Los Angeles, Cal.

SIR: Professor Hartmann breathes the wisdom of the ages, as well as his own, in "Pacifism and Democracy." Alas, there are many good souls who use such wisdom only to examine the distant past or wonder at the distant future. But a number of us are unwilling to sacrifice the permanent values of pacifism on the altar of so-called national necessity, for we are convinced that the common sense of this proven pacifist way of life is a stern requirement for world survival, right now.

FRANCIS BEHN RIGGS

Cambridge, Mass.

MARY MARGARET McBRIDE

SIR: Allen Churchill's article on Mary Margaret McBride [in the January *MERCURY*] is unfair, patronizing and certainly unkind. Mr. Churchill has written a sarcastic, farcical and superficial article about a woman who conducts the most *intelligent* woman's program on the air today. . . .

Nowhere in Mr. Churchill's article does he give Mary Margaret McBride credit for her constant crusade for Peace, her continuous fight for tolerance, her great heart and her sympathetic understanding of people. Nowhere does Mr. Churchill tell of her particular genius for interviewing her fine guests. Neither does Mr. Churchill mention her sincerity, her integrity and her keen sense of humor. Nowhere does he mention the joy Mary Margaret's listeners get from hearing such great men as Douglas Southall Freeman, Carl Sandburg, Carl Van Doren, Dr. Fleming and many, many others as



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brilliant. Nowhere does Allen Churchill give Mary Margaret McBride credit for being what her millions of listeners know her to be — an intelligent, honest, kindly, interesting and sympathetic woman who works like a horse to give her audience a stimulating and worthwhile program. . . .

R. DOTTERER

New York City

SIR: What makes a person rally to another's defense? In my case it isn't just a matter of a radio personality for whom I have a school-girl affinity. Instead it is a complete respect, formed over a period of years, for one whom I feel has the courage of her convictions, as well as the integrity to represent the best. . . .

After fifteen years of listening to the same trustful voice, a bond has been created that is not easily broken, regardless of any criticism or understatement that may come from an interviewer. . . .

I would encourage listeners to master a few eloquent words, describing her effect on the invisible radio audience. Here are a few!

I compare M. M. McB. to a rich symphony that grows on one with repeated listening.

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Just naïve enough to be utterly charming and feminine.

Brilliant mind.

Invisible human companion, who creates analogous harmony in the home.

And so on and on! May she prosper and spread her brooding wings over her audiences for many years to come.

MARJORIE SANDERSON

Chappaqua, N. Y.

A PARSON'S WIFE
REPLIES

SIR: You know, I don't feel sorry for the small-town parson and his wife. I disagree with the Rev. Mr. Hoffstretter in his article in the January *MERCURY*, "The Plight of a Small-Town Parson."

The Head Man and I are a small-town parson and his wife and we like it. In fact,

we like it very much and we have no desire to be anything else.

Like Mr. Hoffstretter and his wife, we had our Tenth Anniversary party in the parish house a few months ago. We had flowers and speeches and mutual congratulations all around, too. But it didn't depress us in the least. We felt swell when it was all over.

The Head Man makes his livelihood from doing what his heart and head tell him is the most important job in the world today. Think of all the men who work hard to earn enough money and leisure to do what they want to do. A man who gets paid for doing work he loves is lucky.

A clergyman's job is exacting. It is working in and for an old, old institution, one that has stood for peace and justice and love for many centuries. The weaknesses of the church are the weaknesses of the people who support it. But to be a leader of men who are trying to go in the right direction is a soul-satisfying job.

True, people in a church can be mighty perverse at times. Non-attending members who want to put on a big show when daughter Susie gets married. And people who are ill but never think to call the clergyman, and who then criticize him for neglecting them. And newcomers who make absolutely no effort but who complain of unfriendliness.

But along with the perversity of a human congregation goes a diversity that keeps a minister's family on the alert. "Well, I wonder what will happen today?" is a daily breakfast comment. It may be good or bad, it may require immediate action or concentrated thought, it may be trivial or of great importance to someone. Whatever it is, though, it is always something different.

A clergyman gets to see people when they are happy and when they are sad and on the quiet days in between. He may share with them the joys of weddings and new babies and rewards for effort. But there are also divorces and funerals and disappointments. All these come to both city and country clergymen — but there seems to be more air in the country to think and work in.

MARGARET HARRISON

Hampton, Va.

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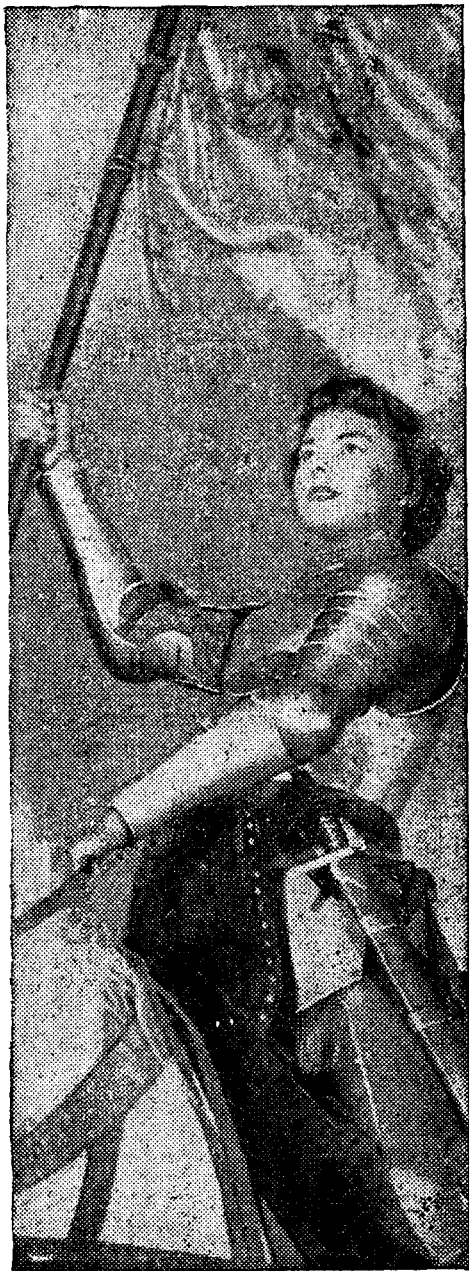
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